

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 1,

Training Speed

“Rumble...” The waves of the Starmist Sea struck against the shores of Miluo Island. The clan leader of the Bagshaw clan, Bakwill, watched alongside Uriah and the others as Linley’s group boarded their metallic lifeform, beginning their journey towards the Bloodridge Continent.

The metallic lifeform had once more transformed into a ship. On the front of the ship.

“We finally left.” O’Brien let out an emotional sigh.

“Right. We left.” Cesar repeated. “I’ll forget this place. Forever!” Linley glanced at Cesar. Previously, Cesar had asked him to help investigate what had happened to Cecily. Although Linley had discovered that the situation seemed off, and that it was uncertain whether or not Cecily was still alive...

He still told Cesar that Cecily was perfectly fine and still living in the clan estate.

“Perhaps this way, Cesar will feel a bit better.” Linley said to himself.

“We’re finally leaving. Father, we’re finally leaving.” The elder Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion, ‘Cleo’, was extremely excited as well. In the past, he and his brother had no idea that their father had been under soul domination. Only now did they know.

They felt a surge of terror just thinking about it.

“Right. We’re leaving. We’ve escaped.” Dylin stared into the distant southeastern skies, not turning at all. He would most likely never return to Miluo Island ever again.

“Screech!” An ear-piercing sound suddenly shook the heavens.

Linley turned to look. It was Tarosse. Tarosse’s head was raised, and he was emitting an ear-piercing screech, his entire body trembling. After a long time, he finally ceased his howling. Tarosse turned to look at Linley, his eyes slightly red. “Linley. I won’t say too much about this great kindness you have shown me. Thank you.”

Someone who had never been soul dominated would never understand how Tarosse and Dylin were currently feeling.

“Haha, let’s go. Let’s go to the Bloodridge Continent. Let’s go to the Indigo Prefecture.” Linley held Delia by the hand.

Their trip over the Starmist Sea was very calm. They occasionally met a few bandits, but given the power of Linley’s squad, the Highgods amongst them only had to show themselves and the bandits were immediately terrified and would flee.

This trip was an uneventful one.

Within the ship cabin.

Linley was seated in the meditative stance in a corner. His original body as well as his three divine clones were all in this state. After this last experience, Linley realized what his greatest weakness was. His soul!

It wasn't that his profound mysteries in terms of soul defense was weak!

At present, he had fused the Throbbing Pulse of the World, Gravitational Space, and the Essence of the Earth. His soul defense, in terms of profound mysteries, wasn't weak. The biggest problem was his foundation; in other words, the strength of his soul!

The power of a God's soul, in quality, was far weaker than that of a Highgod's soul. Although Linley, through using soul-related profound mysteries, had soul defense comparable to that of an ordinary Highgod, and also had that damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact...it was precisely because of that Sovereign artifact that Linley was able to roam the Starmist Sea, slay Ganmontin, and slay so many Highgods. If he didn't have it, how could Linley, a mere God, possibly be so strong?

Sovereign divine artifacts were simply too powerful.

"Right now, my number one target must be to reach the Highgod stage as soon as possible." Linley knew where he needed to develop himself. "Once I become a Highgod, I can once again refine a large amount of amethysts, and with amethysts as well as the natural Highgod boost, my soul power will increase tens of times over! Once that happens, as long as I only need to defend that flaw in the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, I won't need to be afraid of even a Seven Star Fiend skilled in soul attacks."

Linley knew all of this very well.

It might perhaps be easier for someone at the God level to fuse profound mysteries, as upon reaching the Highgod level, the difficulty level would rise greatly.

But at the same time, fusing a large number of profound mysteries as a God also took an astonishing amount of time. For example, the 'Worldwalking' profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth, up till now, still hadn't yet even begun to be fused with any of the other three profound mysteries, much less completely fused.

"I currently have three types of profound mysteries. If I need to fuse four of them, it seems that I would have to thank my lucky stars to be able to fuse them in even ten thousand years."

"Right now, I've gained a basic understanding of the 'Profound Mysteries of Strength'. I need to hurry up and master the 'Profound Mysteries of Strength', and then I'll train in the final 'Vitality' mystery. Once all six are completed, I will be a Highgod. By then, my power will grow dramatically! In terms of material defense or soul defense, I won't have any glaring weaknesses. I'll be able to deal against most Seven Star Fiends."

Linley knew that upon becoming a Highgod, it was still possible to fuse profound mysteries. Only, the difficulty level would rise exponentially.

"Once I become a Highgod, I can continue to slowly fuse them."

As long as one became a Highgod on one's own, there was still hope for fusing.

"I need to thank Mosi. If it hadn't been for his sledgehammer blow, who knows how long it would have been before I would have gained basic insight into the Profound Mysteries of Strength?" Linley quieted his mind, allowing his original body as well as his divine earth clone to whole-heartedly delve into training in the 'Profound Mysteries of Strength'.

Right now, Linley was favoring the Laws of the Earth.

As for the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley had only begun to train in five profound mysteries. He had four more that he needed to train in, and the amount of time that took was astonishing as well.

As for the Elemental Laws of Fire, Linley's divine fire clone, till now, was still not even at the God level.

"Training in the Elemental Laws of Fire is simply too slow." Linley now had an even greater appreciation for the importance of talent.

If one was talented, then one would train faster, such as Linley with the Laws of the Earth and the Laws of the Wind. In less than a thousand years, Linley had reached the level of learning five of the Laws of the Earth.

But if one's talent was poor...

Although there was no bottleneck yet, Linley still had yet to even master a second profound mystery of the Elemental Laws of Fire.

Breaking through bottlenecks required insights, luck, and comprehension ability.

However, normal training was reliant on talent.

Linley's elemental affinity for 'earth' and 'wind', based on the test that had been done when he was young, was 'exceptional'! As for 'fire', it was only 'average'. As for the others, his affinity was very low.

Clearly, Linley had the greatest chance of becoming a Highgod soon through his divine earth clone. His divine earth clone's power was clearly more powerful, and so naturally, with even his original body training in the Laws of the Earth, his training speed became even faster.

The Starmist Sea. Endless and boundless. Occasionally, an island would be seen.

"Rumble..." The metallic lifeform continuously advanced through the waves.

Linley and Delia were currently shoulder-to-shoulder, staring towards the southeast. Next to them was Olivier, Bebe, O'Brien, Dylin, Tarosse, Cesar, and others. They all had smiles on their faces.

From afar, they saw a hint of a line that was extremely, extremely long. The line was a shore.

"The Bloodridge Continent. We finally arrived!" Linley was incomparably excited.

After heading out from Miluo Island, they had travelled for twenty three years, and now, they were finally at the Bloodridge Continent.

"We're at the Bloodridge Continent now. The Indigo Prefecture won't be far away." Bebe's eyes were shining. "Boss, I remember that on that map, it seemed as though the Indigo Prefecture wasn't too far away from the sea shore. Ohoho, after nearly seven hundred years, we are almost there, finally."

Linley and Delia held each other's hands tightly, staring towards the shore.

"Linley, once we arrive at the Bloodridge Continent, shall we head directly for the Indigo Prefecture, or to accept another escort mission headed towards the Indigo Prefecture?" Olivier looked at Linley. After all, this was what Linley had done in the past.

"No need."

Linley shook his head. "In the past, I was weak and was afraid of trouble. Now, we'll head straight for Indigo Prefecture. No need to fear anything on the way over." Linley was now extremely confident in himself, and his squad had quite a few Highgods.

In addition, Tarosse was an expert on the level of a Six Star Fiend as well.

The metallic lifeform moved forward at a very fast pace. Soon, it reached the continental shelf. Immediately, the 'ship' shaped metallic lifeform transformed into a panther-shape, flying in the air above the Bloodridge Continent.

The Bloodridge Continent was similar to the Redbud Continent.

Various tribes were scattered everywhere, and bandits were scattered everywhere as well. Battles could occur at any moment. But of course, no bandit squad would dare offend Linley's squad.

"Linley, how is your training progressing?" Tarosse laughed.

On the way over, Tarosse and Dylin had finally learned that Linley was only a God. As for how a God could release such astonishing power, Linley just gave a fairly general explanation.

However, Tarosse and Dylin could tell that this all had to do with the Amethyst Mountains.

"Not bad. I've reached the later stages of the Profound Mysteries of Strength." Linley revealed a hint of a smile on his face. "Unfortunately, I still haven't even gotten a basic understanding of the Profound Mysteries of Vitality." This was what frustrated Linley the most. 'Vitality'.

Based on the book which had given him a general description of the various profound mysteries, the 'Vitality' mystery was one of the unique profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, and was exceedingly hard to gain insight into.

For each profound mystery, getting basic insights as well as breaking through the final bottleneck to mastery was the two hardest steps. If one was slow, one could be stuck for a million years, and that would be considered normal.

"No rush. Perhaps you'll gain a sudden insight soon." Tarosse laughed.

Linley laughed and nodded as well. It was true. For example, he had suddenly gained an insight into the 'Profound Mysteries of Strength', and so he had gained a basic understanding.

"Your training speed is already very impressive. You've trained for less than a thousand years, and yet you've gained insights into five of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. And, more importantly...you've fused three of them." Tarosse was quite admiring of Linley.

Tarosse himself had only fused two profound mysteries, and had relied on his innate divine ability, along with those two profound mysteries, to reach the power level of a Six Star Fiend.

"Hey, Tarosse, that goes without saying. My Boss has always been awesome." Bebe walked over as well and said arrogantly, "Look at you. You've been training for I don't even know how many years, but you've only fused two profound mysteries. Hmph."

Tarosse couldn't help but laugh. "Bebe, don't be so smug. You train in the Laws of Darkness, right? I want to ask you, of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness, how many have you trained in, and how many have you fused? As I recall, you've been training with Linley for about the same length of time."

"Haha..." The nearby O'Brien and Cesar both began to laugh.

Linley couldn't help but begin to laugh towards Bebe as well.

Everyone knew that Bebe didn't have any patience for training. At most, he'd be able to calm his mind and train for a year or so, after which he'd begin to get restless. With an attitude like that...no matter how talented he was, if he didn't work hard, how could he improve?

"Tarosse, you know that's just how Bebe is, and yet you ask him this question?" Dylin said.

Bebe was so angry, even his nose was trembling. "Right. I haven't even fused a single profound mystery!"

"Bebe, enough. Don't be angry." Linley laughed as he patted Bebe on the shoulder, but Bebe raised his head proudly. "But of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness, I, Bebe, have gained insights into four of them!"

Everyone within the cabin immediately fell silent.

Linley wondered if he was hearing things. He couldn't help but look at Bebe. "Bebe, what'd you say?" Linley remembered quite clearly that Bebe hadn't spent much time training. Normally, he would just mess around, and only occasionally would he train.

"Bebe, say it again. I suspect I misheard." Tarosse said, and even Dylin and Olivier were looking at Bebe.

Neither Dylin nor Olivier had, as of yet, successfully mastered four profound mysteries.

"Listen up, and listen clearly." Bebe raised his eyebrows smugly, then said loudly, "I, Bebe, despite not having fused a single profound mystery, have already mastered four of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness, and am currently training in a fifth!"

Linley himself had only mastered four of the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, and was currently working on the fifth.

"Bebe, it's fine if you are slow in training, but you can't just make things up." Cesar said.

"Make things up?" Bebe was so angry, his eyes bulged out.

Bebe flipped his hand, and darkness-type elemental essence swirled around, forming a black serpent which wrapped around Bebe's arm. It even emitted a hissing sound, as though it were real.

"This is the Essence of Darkness." Bebe said smugly. "See it?"

"You knew that one all along." Olivier laughed.

Bebe's body flickered, and instantly, dozens of doppelgangers of Bebe appeared within the cabin. Everyone remained calm; they all knew that Bebe was in possession of the Shadowshape Doppelganger technique.

"Hmph."

Bebe suddenly let out a cold snort.

Very bizarrely, one black tentacle after another emerged from Bebe's body. Instantly, Bebe had become like an octopus, with the area around his body being filled by dozens of long, icy cold tentacles. The black, misty aura they emanated was exceedingly bizarre.

Linley was surprised, and everyone else was stunned.

Laws of Darkness – The Profound Mysteries of ‘Evil’.

“That was the third. This is the fourth.” Bebe’s body flickered, and those evil tentacles disappeared. Bebe reached out with his right hand, and from within it, a vortex appeared which seemed to be devouring everything around it, swallowing up even light itself. The area of darkness grew larger and larger.

Laws of Darkness – The Profound Mysteries of ‘Devour’.

Everyone in the cabin was speechless. Olivier, up till now, had only mastered two profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness, and was currently researching a third. As for Dylin, he had only mastered three and was currently training in a fourth.

But Bebe had actually been faster than them.

“How is this possible?”

“Hmph. You actually didn’t believe me. Bebe! Let me tell you, it’s possible that tomorrow, I’ll have mastered the fifth one.” Bebe smugly adjusted his straw hat, his head raised proudly.

“Bebe, what’s this all about?” Linley was utterly puzzled.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 2,

Travelling to Indigo Prefecture

From going from the Yulan continent to the Infernal Realm, Bebe had always been by Linley's side. Linley knew very clearly how hard (or not) Bebe had trained. Logically speaking, it should be impossible for Bebe to have mastered four profound mysteries.

However, Bebe had succeeded.

This was a reality! Everyone had seen this.

"Bebe, how did you train?" Dylin was in disbelief as well.

"How could you be so fast?" Olivier, no matter how calm he normally was, had been stunned. They all stared at Bebe. Clearly, all of them wanted to know why Bebe was able to train so quickly, so as to see if they could also learn from this method.

Bebe just laughed smugly.

"I told you so, but you guys didn't believe, earlier." Bebe said forcefully.

"We believe you now, but how did you do this?" Tarosse asked as well. Even the greatest of geniuses had a process by which they trained. Linley had seized every moment to train, and his talent had been on full display in the Yulan continent. Everyone had watched him improve, step by step.

But Bebe? Nobody had dared to believe that his training speed could catch up to Linley's.

"I'm Bebe!" Bebe stared at the surrounding people. He said smugly, "You didn't believe me. All I'll say is...it has to do with my Grandpa Beirut. I won't say anything else."

"Lord Beirut?" Tarosse and Dylin were mystified.

Training was a personal matter. No matter how powerful Beirut was, he wasn't by Bebe's side. How could he help Bebe?

"Those smug looks on your faces just now...hmp. I won't tell you. Slowly ponder it on your own. I'll only tell my Boss." Bebe turned to glance at Linley, then chortled and said through the soul, "Boss, are you surprised?"

"I am indeed surprised." Linley couldn't understand either how Bebe had trained so quickly.

Bebe smiled mysteriously, then said through his divine sense, "Boss, do you still remember how Grandpa Beirut had said that to help me train faster, he had paid a very heavy price and obtained many treasures to help me breakthrough faster? He said that I was very slow to have taken twenty years before mastering the Essence of Darkness and reaching the God level, and that if it had been you, most likely a single year would have been enough."

Linley immediately recalled this.

Beirut had indeed said such a thing.

Back then, Linley hadn't yet entered the Infernal Realm, and so he didn't clearly understand how powerful Beirut was. After arriving in the Infernal Realm, however, Linley finally realized how mighty Beirut was. Beirut had created that godspark weapon for Bebe, then infused it with that pearl.

The power of that attack had actually destroyed the divine artifact of Elquin, a Seven Star Fiend!

"If it had been Lord Beirut himself, he most likely would have easily killed that Seven Star Fiend." Linley still remembered how the master of Castle Hendsey, 'Mosi', had said that there were very few people in the Infernal Realm capable of creating soul-protecting divine artifacts.

"But Lord Beirut had made a soul-protecting divine artifact for Bebe."

Linley mused to himself, "Godspark weapons are priceless items in the Infernal Realm as well. They are exceedingly costly. Even if all he did was sell off a few godspark weapons, Lord Beirut would be a person of astonishing wealth. In addition, he is a Sovereign's Emissary!"

Despite having been in the Infernal Realm for so long, Linley had yet to hear of someone else who was a Sovereign's Emissary!

To be selected by a Sovereign...naturally, only absolute topmost Highgods would be selected.

"Lord Beirut said that he had spent an enormous price to acquire some treasures. Given Lord Beirut's power, for even him to say that the price was enormous...what treasure could it have been?" Linley understood that even a trillion inkstones, to Lord Beirut, was nothing.

A single godspark weapon, in and of itself, was worth far more!

What sort of treasure could possibly cause Lord Beirut to say that it had cost him an 'enormous price'?

He hadn't realized this earlier, but now that Linley thought of this, he became all the more curious.

"Bebe, what sort of treasure is it? For even your Grandpa Beirut to say it cost an enormous price, and for it to be capable of helping you train so quickly..." Linley hurriedly asked through their spiritual bond.

Bebe laughed. "Boss, that treasure is...soul fragment strips!"

"Soul fragment strips?" Linley didn't understand.

"Right. Grandpa Beirut knew that I didn't have the temperament to slowly train, so he came up with this idea. Grandpa Beirut went to the Infernal Realm and spent an enormous price to invite a major figure to gather the souls of countless Prime Saints and fragment them into strips! He completely peeled out all of the fragments containing 'Profound Mysteries of the Laws' in the souls of those Saints."

Linley was stunned.

Peeling off strips from the soul?

When Linley had been in the Yulan continent, he had seen the then Grand Magus Necromancer, 'Zassler', execute a 'Soulscur' on a soul. Only, that just removed a portion of a soul's memories; there was no one to clearly sense the insights within a person's soul.

"Grandpa Beirut said that peeling off soul fragment strips is very hard! In addition, a Deity's soul is fused with his divine spark, and so it's impossible to carve out soul fragment strips from them. The only choice for doing this is with Saints!" Bebe continued to chat through divine sense. "To completely peel off the portion of a soul with insights into the profound mysteries of a Law is something which only a very few people in

the Infernal Realm can do. Grandpa Beirut said that he himself couldn't do it either, so he had to pay an enormous price to invite an expert to help out."

Linley was secretly surprised.

In places such as the Blacksand Castle and the Redbud Castle, Linley had never heard of 'soul fragment strips' being available for purchase. These things were simply priceless. Most likely, only major personages like Beirut were capable of acquiring them.

"When I became an adult, I naturally became a Deity, and so gained insight into the 'Shadowshape Doppelganger' mystery. Grandpa asked some of his friends to help out and acquire four pieces of 'soul fragment strips' for me, which contained four of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness."

Bebe sent resignedly, "Grandpa Beirut said that most Prime Saints had only gained insights into very ordinary profound mysteries, such as the 'Essence of Darkness'. Very few have insights into 'Devour' or 'Evil'."

"Grandpa's friends also were forced to spend an enormous amount of effort and to very carefully peel off those soul fragments. It is extremely difficult to completely peel off the part of the soul with the insights into a profound mystery. In the end, he managed to acquire four, which he gave to me for fusing." Bebe sent mentally.

Linley was completely stunned.

Souls were very unique things, and even soul attacks were hard to develop.

To completely peel off the part of a soul which contained insights into the profound mysteries of a Law...one could imagine how hard it was just thinking about it.

"To reach this level, how deep must one's mastery with regards to the soul be?" Linley felt this was almost unbelievable.

Beirut himself was capable of making soul-protecting divine artifacts, which meant that Beirut had already reached a very high level of accomplishment with regards to the soul. But even Beirut was not capable of this, and had to pay a huge price to invite others to do it for him.

One could imagine how hard peeling off soul fragments was.

"Lord Beirut's friends are truly amazing." Linley sighed to himself.

There was no way one could peel any fragments from the soul of a Deity, so it had to be done to Prime Saints instead.

"Who knows how many Prime Saints were killed for these soul fragments to be acquired." Linley sighed to himself, but he also understood that in the Infernal Realm, the mighty were respected. In the Infernal Realm, many tribes raised Saint-level magical beasts, then butchered them and retrieved their body parts for sale to restaurants.

In the Infernal Realm, Saints were treated as humans treated wild rabbits in the material realms. They could be killed at leisure.

"Alas. Prime Saints are all people who have gained some insights into a single profound mystery and have reached a bottleneck and are just one step away from completion." Bebe sighed. "Thus, with regards to these four profound mysteries, I've gained insights all the way through to the bottleneck. For breaking through the bottleneck, though, I still have to rely on myself!"

“In the Yulan continent, it only took me twenty years to break through in the Essence of Darkness.”

“In the Infernal Realm, it’s been seven hundred years. I’ve occasionally gained some insights, and broke through to obtain mastery in the ‘Devour’ and ‘Evil’ profound mysteries. Right now, I’ve completely mastered four types, while I’m at a bottleneck for the fifth. As for the sixth...I’m completely blind and have no idea as to what it is about.”

Linley completely understood.

Bebe was a divine beast. As soon as he reached adulthood, he would naturally master one type of profound mystery and become a Deity! This was the first profound mystery, ‘Shadowshape Doppelganger’.

Afterwards, Lord Beirut, knowing that Bebe had no patience, didn’t want Bebe to become a Highgod through fusing with a divine spark. Thus, he had paid an enormous price to procure those four strips of soul fragments to have Bebe fuse them, and thus naturally reach the ‘bottleneck’ stage in those four profound mysteries.

As soon as he gained an insight into one of them, he would reach mastery.

He didn’t need to train at all.

“No wonder. No wonder.” Linley let out two sighs.

Sometimes, one could be angered to death when looking at others. Linley had spent every day and every night training, but Bebe had spent all his time fooling around. When, for some reason, he gained a sudden insight, he would achieve mastery. This was simply too easy.

However, in Linley’s mind, he was still very happy for Bebe.

“Lord Beirut truly has taken exceedingly good care of Bebe.” Linley sighed.

Beirut had a very high status, while Bebe was the second Godeater Rat in his lineage. Beirut naturally viewed Bebe as a treasure and doted upon him to an unbelievable extent. For Bebe’s sake, he had been willing to exhaust himself and run throughout the Infernal Realm to ask friends to help out.

From this alone, Linley could tell how powerful and vast Lord Beirut’s connections were.

“Peeling off soul strips...that’s hard work and careful work. For that powerful figure to actually be willing to do this for the sake of Lord Beirut...” Linley understood now how influential Beirut himself was.

The metallic lifeform continued to speed towards Indigo Prefecture. As for the secret regarding why Bebe had trained so quickly, in the end, Bebe only told Linley and Delia. The others didn’t know. Clearly, in Bebe’s heart, Linley and Delia were closer to him.

After they had reached the Bloodridge Continent, the metallic lifeform had flown on for three years.

“Boss, look. Stonesword Mountain!” Bebe pointed through the translucent window towards the east.

Linley looked carefully. In the distance to the east, there was an exceedingly tall mountain, its peak seeming to pierce through the heavens. The upper part of the peak was shaped like a heavy sword, and at the peak of this sword-shaped mountain, the clouds swirled about.

“Stonesword Mountain. We finally reached the Indigo Prefecture!” Delia said with excitement.

Stonesword Mountain was one of the important landmarks in the maps of Indigo Prefecture.

Linley felt the blood surging throughout his body. “Finally here. We’re finally here! Indigo Prefecture!”

The place which his dreams and his very soul had been focused on.

When in the Yulan continent, Linley had learned of Indigo Prefecture. He knew that his ancestors, the elders of the Baruch clan had all come to Indigo Prefecture. Linley thus had embarked on this one-way trip to the Infernal Realm!

From the Redbud Continent all the way over to here, they had encountered countless tribulations. The battle at the castle of sand. The volcano range. The breakthrough in the Amethyst Mountains. The shocking danger of Miluo Island...and now finally, after passing through the Starmist Sea, they had arrived at the Bloodridge Continent, arrived at Indigo Prefecture!

“Indigo Prefecture!”

Linley took a deep breath. Currently, he was unbearably eager to go meet the ancestors of his Baruch clan.

“Boss, we don’t know the exact location of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Bebe said.

“It’s simple.” Linley was all smiles. “Let’s first go to the nearest city, Fansi City. The Four Divine Beasts clan should be extremely famous in the Indigo Prefecture. To find the place where the Four Divine Beasts clan live should be quite simple.”

The metallic lifeform sped directly for Fansi City. Fansi City was the first city which Linley’s group would be entering upon reaching the Indigo Prefecture.

After flying for many days.

Linley and everyone else was drinking wine and chatting idly in the living room of the metallic lifeform. As they were about to reach his ancestral clan, Linley was very happy. In this final stage of the journey, Linley was, for once, not training.

“Boom!” Suddenly, a powerful vibration shook out from the skies, shaking Linley’s metallic lifeform.

The metallic lifeform trembled.

“What a powerful wave.”

“Hey, what’s going on?” Linley and the others stood up, looking out through the window.

The metallic lifeform flew very fast, and soon, Linley’s group saw something which utterly stunned them...

In the distant skies, nearly a hundred Highgods were fleeing in panic. They were currently being slaughtered by three white-robed men!

“Haha, you won’t be able to flee!” A white-robed figure laughed loudly.

The three white-robed men all had long golden hair, golden eyebrows, and were as handsome as any fairies which Linley had ever seen. The three white-robed men flashed about at high speed, and the Highgods on the other side all fell down from the skies.

Those Highgods were terror-struck!

“Flee!” With a furious shout, those dozens of lucky survivors immediately dispersed in every direction.

“You won’t be able to!” A calm voice rang out.

One of the white-robed men whose long hair fluttered in the air suddenly had a pair of golden wings that were ten meters long grow out of his back. This enormous set of golden wings was covered with a hazy golden light, and holy energy spread out in every direction.

The golden-winged man, his entire body wrapped up in golden light, seemed so holy and beautiful.

“I sentence you...to death!”

The white-robed man said softly.

A translucent golden ripple spread out in every direction, and those dozens of fleeing Highgods, no matter how fast they had been fleeing, were unable to move faster than this ripple.

Immediately, those dozens of Highgods who had been fleeing in every direction fell down from the skies. Only the original leader of those hundred Highgods remained, and he stared in terror and rage at the three white-robed men in front of him.

“So strong.” Linley, Tarosse, and the others were all stunned.

“He trains in the Edicts of Fate.” Tarosse said in a low voice. “Judging from his power, that white-robed man, if not a Seven Star Fiend, must at least be a Six Star Fiend.”

“Edicts of Fate?”

In the Infernal Realm, Linley rarely encountered experts who trained in the Edicts of Fate, because most of them had gone to the ‘Celestial Realm’ of the Four Higher Planes. The few he had actually seen weren’t very powerful.

“A Highgod that trains in the Edicts of Fate.” Linley was secretly startled.

From mid-air, a bellow rang out.

“Why. We have never offended your Boleyn [Bo’lin] clan. Why must you be so ruthless, to kill us all and spare not a single one of us?” The lucky survivor, the leader, couldn’t help but bellow out in rage.

Those three white-robed men all faintly glowed with golden light.

“Why? Aren’t you on assignment for the Four Divine Beasts clan?” One of the white-robed men laughed coldly.

“Four Divine Beasts clan?” The surviving leader said, stunned.

“All who serve the Four Divine Beasts clan will die!” The white-robed man who had the pair of golden wings said, then he pointed out with his right hand and a ray of golden light shot out.

The leader wasn’t able to dodge in time. The golden light struck into his body, and he fell down from mid-air.

The white-robed man with the golden wings cast a sideways glance at Linley’s distant metallic lifeform, then let out a disdainful snort. “Let’s go.” The three white-robed figures transformed into three rays of light, disappearing into the horizon.

“All those who serve the Four Divine Beasts shall die?” Within the metallic lifeform, Linley murmured to himself, momentarily speechless.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 3, Azure Dragon Clan

According to what Linley had learned on the way, as well as what he had heard from Beirut, as Linley saw it, the Four Divine Beasts clan was extremely powerful. At Miluo Island, after seeing the many sryer recordings, he had mentioned to Castle Master Mosi the fact that he was headed for Indigo Prefecture, and Mosi had discussed the Four Divine Beasts clan.

From what Mosi had said, it seemed as though the Four Divine Beasts clan had fallen on hard times.

But even despite that, it should still be almost comparable to the Bagshaw clan.

“The Bagshaw clan, at Miluo Island, is in complete control. No one dares offend them! Despite countless years having passed, Miluo Island’s fame remains widespread. There’s no way something like this could happen at Miluo Island, where those who serve the Bagshaw clan will be killed!”

Linley really couldn’t believe it.

The Indigo Prefecture could be said to be the main headquarters for the Four Divine Beasts clan. How could something like this happen within the borders of the mighty Four Divine Beast clan? How could a truly powerful clan allow something like this to happen?

Anyone who thought about it for even a moment would understand.

If a truly powerful clan encountered something like this, they would definitely eradicate the entire ‘Boleyn clan’, killing them as a warning sign to frighten others!

“The situation doesn’t make sense.” Linley narrowed his eyes. The joy he had felt upon arriving at his clan’s territory instantly evaporated, and Linley began to worry. It seemed as the situation the Four Divine Beast clan was in wasn’t what he had thought it would be.

In the metallic lifeform, Tarosse, Bebe, Delia, and the others were all mystified by what they had just seen.

Tarosse said with a solemn look, “Linley, it seems as though the Four Divine Beast clan doesn’t have much power within Indigo Prefecture.” When Linley had invited Tarosse and the others to Indigo Prefecture, he had said that that within the Indigo Prefecture, given the strength and influence of the Four Divine Beast clan, they shouldn’t encounter any more dangers.

But now, it seemed...

“I don’t understand either.” Linley’s face was solemn.

After all, he had never gone to the Four Divine Beast clan before. All he knew, he gained from outside sources of information.

“I’m sorry. It seems as though I’ve caused everyone to enter a dangerous situation.” Linley couldn’t help but say towards Olivier, Tarosse, and the others. When he had invited them to come with him, he had wanted for all of them from the Yulan continent to be together and that there wouldn’t be much danger.

As he saw it, there shouldn’t be any dangers in the main lair for his clan.

But it seemed he was wrong!

Dylin laughed. “Linley, don’t worry about it. No matter what happens, my life can be considered to belong to you. What have I to fear?”

“Let’s go. Even if someone wants to kill us, first they have to have enough power to do so!” Tarosse said.

Linley nodded. If the Four Divine Beast clan was comparable to the Bagshaw clan, then, as an incredibly powerful force, there was no way they would simply be destroyed. As the saying goes, a camel which died of starvation is still larger than a horse.

Mosi’s words implied that the weakened Four Divine Beast clan was still comparable to the Bagshaw clan.

But before its downfall?

How could such an originally incomparably powerful clan possibly be completely destroyed?

“Let’s go to Fansi City first.”

Fansi City was a city in the eastern part of Indigo Prefecture, and was the first city which Linley’s group was heading towards in Indigo Prefecture. Fansi City was just like every other city in the Infernal Realm; it was very bustling!

The streets were rowdy and filled with people everywhere.

“Boss, where shall we go to find the location of the Four Divine Beast clan?” Bebe asked, puzzled.

The War God, O’Brien, laughed. “Any place works. For example, the Fiend Castle. We can just ask some people there. There are definitely people here in the Indigo Prefecture who know quite a bit regarding the exceedingly famous Four Divine Beast clan.”

Asking around at the Fiend Castle was indeed an excellent idea.

“No rush. Let’s go to the Bloodridge Castle first!” Linley said.

The Redbud Continent had Redbud Castles, while the Bloodridge Continent had Bloodridge Castles. The two were the same; they both purchased and sold large quantities of items.

“Why are we going to the Bloodridge Castle?” Dylin asked.

“Bebe, do you still remember how we had gone shopping for books that time in the Redbud Castle?” Linley turned to look at Bebe, who hurriedly nodded. “I remember. That time, we went to buy some books regarding the geography of the Infernal Realm.”

“Right. Last time, we only went to investigate the general geography of the Infernal Realm, which is why in the books we bought, the information regarding the 108 Prefectures was very brief. But that time, however, we did see quite a few books which discussed each prefecture in detail.”

There had been five or six centimeter thick books that discussed each prefecture.

Those detailed books each focused on one prefecture, and naturally would discuss and point out some of the unique areas in a prefecture, as well as provide some very detailed information on some of the most powerful clans. Most likely, even some ultimate experts would be described within.

Delia's eyes lit up, and she nodded in agreement. "Buy one which goes into detail regarding the 'Indigo Prefecture'. The Four Divine Beast clan is very famous in Indigo Prefecture. It will definitely be described in detail, and the location will be clearly mentioned as well."

Linley laughed and nodded.

If they asked others, others might point them to a specific place which they didn't even know was located where.

After all, they had never had a detailed map of the Indigo Prefecture. They only knew the rough geography of the place. By buying a detailed book regarding the Indigo Prefecture, they would even get a clear understanding of the geographical information in the Indigo Prefecture.

"Buying books? I've never gone book shopping in the Infernal Realm." Tarosse laughed.

"You normally lived on Miluo Island. Why would you need to buy books? You'd only go buy them when you needed them." Linley said, then headed towards the Bloodridge Castle.

The three castles in every single city were bustling with activity. Following the flow of people, Linley's group quickly reached the Bloodridge Castle. At the gate to the Bloodridge Castle, there were Bloodridge Army soldiers standing guard.

"Heh heh, I must say, the uniform of the Bloodridge Army is quite stylish. It's much better than that of the Redbud Army and the Starmist Army." Bebe said softly as he looked at the Bloodridge Army soldiers at the gates.

Linley glanced at them. "The baleful aura it emanates is rather heavier than that of the Redbud Army and the Starmist Army."

"Let's go." As he spoke, Linley led the group into the first floor of the Bloodridge Castle. The way the Bloodridge Castle was organized was quite similar to the Redbud Castle. Linley's group easily found the room which specialized in selling a large number of books.

In the room, there were only three people, one of whom was the staff member.

"What do you want to buy?" Seeing Linley's group walk in, and that most were Highgods, the staff member immediately came to welcome them.

"Which book has information regarding the location of the Four Divine Beast clan?" Bebe was the first to say.

But Linley said, "This place should have a detailed description of the entire Indigo Prefecture, right? Give me that book."

"We do." The female staff member withdrew an enormous, black covered book that was two fingers thick, then walked over and handed it to Linley. "This one should be the book with the most complete introduction to the Indigo Prefecture."

Linley immediately accepted it and began to flip through it.

This book, in its table of contents, was divided into 'geography', 'dangerous areas', 'famous people', 'clans'...and so on and so forth. From the table of contents, Linley easily found the top ranked 'Four Divine Beast clan'.

"Page 158!" Linley couldn't help but grow excited.

The first thing which drew Linley's attention was...

The Four Divine Beast clan was actually the general term for four mighty divine beast clans.

They were:

The Azure Dragon clan: The Leyding [Lei'ding] clan!

The Vermilion Bird clan: The Nimo [Ne'mo] clan!

The White Tiger clan: The Laius [Li'e'si] clan!

The Black Tortoise clan: The Bowen [Bo'wen] clan!

The Four Divine Beast clan was led by the Azure Dragon clan, the Leyding clan. The four great clans were joined together into one, and were spread throughout the Four Higher Planes...

While reading the detailed information regarding the Four Divine Beast clan, Linley couldn't help but begin to sweat. The history of the Four Divine Beast clan simply astonished Linley. So originally, the Four Divine Beast clan wasn't just limited to the Infernal Realm!

"Divine Water Plane, Divine Earth Plane, Divine Fire Plane, Divine Wind Plane, and the Four Higher Planes of the Celestial Realm, Netherworld, Infernal Realm, Life Realm...they all have branches of the Four Divine Beast clan!"

Linley was completely thunderstruck.

Based on the description within the book, the Four Divine Beast clan was considered an extremely, terrifyingly powerful clan throughout the Four Higher Planes as well as the Seven Divine Planes. They were spread everywhere, but of course, in the Infernal Realm, Indigo Prefecture was a headquarters for the Four Divine Beast clan.

"They are so powerful?" Linley found it hard to believe.

"Boss, lemme see." Bebe, seeing the look on Linley's face, couldn't help but snatch the book over from Linley and begin to read it carefully as well. As he read, Bebe's eyes began to grow round. "Wow, Boss, the Four Divine Beast clan is really badass."

Delia leaned over to look as well.

"They really are quite formidable." Delia was stunned as well.

"We can leave now. I now know where the Four Divine Beast clan is located." Linley couldn't help but smile. The Four Divine Beast clan was the root and foundation of his own Baruch clan, which could only be considered one of the many branches.

Naturally, Linley was delighted at how powerful the main clan was.

"Wait." Linley suddenly frowned.

If the Four Divine Beast clan truly was so powerful, then why was it that when he came, he saw that member of the Boleyn clan, the one who could grow golden wings, be so arrogant and unbridled?

"You are looking for the location of the Four Divine Beast clan?" Suddenly, a clear voice rang out.

Linley's group turned to look. The speaker was that female staff member.

The female staff member laughed and said, "If you want to just follow the information in the book to look for them, there's no way you'll find the Four Divine Beast clan."

"Eh?" Linley was stunned.

"Why not? Is the book fake?" Bebe immediately asked.

The female staff member shook her head. "No, the descriptions in the book are real."

"If they are real, then why can't we find them?" Bebe said.

The female staff member laughed. "This book is in general circulation and for sale in every single city in the Infernal Realm. Because the Infernal Realm is too vast, just sending it out to each location will most likely take a thousand years."

Linley nodded. To send it throughout the Infernal Realm, it would indeed take upwards of a thousand years.

"Because the shipping process alone takes so much time, the geographical information in the book will be re-evaluated and updated once every million years. This book is several hundred thousand years old, and it described what the situation was like for the Four Divine Beast clan hundreds of thousands of years ago." The female staff said.

The Infernal Realm was vast and endless. A million years, in the ancient history of the Infernal Realm, really wasn't much.

"Are you saying...?" Linley began to understand.

"Right." The female staff member laughed. "If you asked others, they might not know, but since I've always lived in Indigo Prefecture, I'm quite familiar with the Four Divine Beast clan. The Four Divine Beast clan, roughly ten thousand years ago, underwent a huge change. The branches that had been located in the Divine Planes or the other Higher Planes all returned and regrouped here in the Indigo Prefecture of the Infernal Realm."

Linley now understood.

Lord Beirut had not deceived him. The current Four Divine Beast clan really was in Indigo Prefecture.

Delia asked, puzzled, "What caused the Four Divine Beast clan to summon and concentrate all of their branches here in the Indigo Prefecture?" Delia didn't understand.

"I'm not sure." The female staff member said with a laugh. "That year, a large number of experts of the Four Divine Beast clan returned, but when they did so, they shook the entire Indigo Prefecture, because when they returned, they brought countless battles with them!"

"Countless battles?" Linley was stunned.

"Right." The female staff member nodded, then laughed. "But of course, I'm just a minor figure, and what I know is limited. All I know is that back then, the battles were quite fierce. Afterwards, the Four Divine Beast clans that had been scattered throughout Indigo Prefecture all came together at one location."

"One location?" Linley still clearly remembered what that book he had read had said.

As that book had described it, in the Four Divine Beast clan, each of the four clans was located in one of four locations.

“Right. The Four Divine Beast clans are living quite close to each other now. The place they live is known as the Skyrite Mountains!” The female staff member said.

Hearing this, Linley immediately thought back to when he had first read the book giving a general introduction to the geographical features of the Infernal Realm, and the information it had regarding the Skyrite Mountains. The Skyrite Mountains were a very famous area within the Indigo Prefecture.

It could, in fact, be described as the mountain range which symbolized the Indigo Prefecture.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 4, Seize Them

After leaving the city of Fansi, Linley's group immediately rode on their metallic lifeform to head towards the Skyrite Mountains.

"The Skyrite Mountains is located within the northern borders of Indigo Prefecture. From Fansi City, there is a distance of nearly two hundred million kilometers. To fly there will take half a year." Linley felt rather relaxed.

After knowing where the Four Divine Beasts clan was, Linley also understood: "Most likely, this place is too far away from the Skyrite Mountains, which is why the Boleyn clan dared to be so arrogant." This was Linley's guess.

"Another half year to go." Bebe stretched lazily, letting out a long sigh, then looked at Linley. "Heh heh, Boss, let's have a contest and see who will be the first to master a fifth profound mystery. What do you say?"

Linley had already reached the late stages in training in the Profound Truths of Strength.

As for Bebe, he had already reached a peak with regards to this fifth profound mystery of Darkness, and as soon as he gained an insight, he would break through. But 'insights' were something that one could hope for but not count on. Who knew how long Bebe would take?

Linley immediately calmed down and began training.

While training, time passed extremely quickly. Linley was only awakened from his training on three occasions. By the fourth time he opened his eyes, they were only a few hundred thousand kilometers away from the Skyrite Mountains and were about to arrive.

The metallic lifeform's front became transparent, and Linley's group could completely see through the metallic lifeform to the front.

"Skyrite Mountains! The Four Divine Beasts clan!" Linley felt that his breathing was growing ragged. The blood in his body was beginning to boil. He had come all the way over here from the Yulan continent. Finally, he was returning to his own clan.

"I can see it. The Skyrite Mountains are up ahead." Delia said in delight.

Linley's eyes were shining.

One massive mountain peaks which pierced through the clouds and the skies could be seen, each one of them astonishingly high. The reason why this area was known as the 'Skyrite' Mountains was precisely because so many mountain peaks here were so tall.

"That is..."

Linley's eyes couldn't help but light up. He saw an enormous bird of almost the same size as a mountain peak that looked as though it was about to take flight, its entire body surrounded by flames. Its feathers were fiery red, and it had green plumage on its forehead. Linley and the others could all feel the dominating aura which emanated forth from it.

“What an enormous sculpture.” Linley couldn’t help but be amazed. “It has to be at least a hundred kilometers tall.” The tallest mountain peaks of the Skyrite Mountains reached upwards of tens of thousands of meters.

This enormous sculpture was comparable in height to the tallest of mountain peaks.

From the book he had read half a year ago, Linley had gained a better understanding of the Four Divine Beasts clan and had learned that the ‘Four Divine Beasts’ referred to the ‘Azure Dragon’, the ‘White Tiger’, the ‘Vermilion Bird’, and the ‘Black Tortoise.’ Just from the names ‘Azure Dragon’ and ‘White Tiger’, Linley was able to understand what the creatures represented.

But Linley had never heard of a ‘Vermilion Bird’ or a ‘Black Tortoise’.

After carefully reading through the book as well as reviewing some of the pictures in the book, Linley learned that a ‘Vermilion Bird’ was a fire-type divine beast that was similar to a ‘Fire Phoenix’, but which was far more powerful. As for the ‘Black Tortoise’, it was an earth-type divine beast that seemed quite similar in appearance to the ‘Dragon-Turtles’ which Linley had seen before.

Even the divine beast ‘Azure Dragon’ was not like those enormous winged dragons that he had seen on the Yulan continent, nor was it like the Tyrant Wyrms. It was a dominating, noble, and utterly perfect, true divine beast.

The most powerful water-type divine beast – the Azure Dragon.

“The southern parts of the Skyrite Mountains should be where the Vermilion Bird clan resides.” Linley immediately controlled the metallic lifeform, ordering it to fly towards the northeast.

Indeed, the eastern part of the Skyrite Mountains was where the Azure Dragon clan lived.

“This...”

In mid-air, staring afar at the distant sight of the Azure Dragon’s ‘Redding’ clan, Linley was stupefied. Even Delia, Bebe, Olivier, Tarosse, and the others were so shocked, they couldn’t speak.

An enormous, coiling dragon that was over tens of thousands kilometers long was within the mountain range.

Of course, it wasn’t a real dragon.

This enormous coiling dragon covered an area of tens of thousands of kilometers, and carved atop of its massive body were giant draconic scales. At the same time, it was also, in and of itself, a long passageway in the mountains, and the entire passageway emitted an azure light. From afar, it truly looked like an enormous, terrifying Azure Dragon!

“To build an enormous edifice of tens of thousands of kilometers long in the Infernal Realm is...unbelievable.” Tarosse sighed in shock.

“Look carefully. The entire body of this Azure Dragon is actually one long passageway, with many castles and residences around that passageway.” Dylin said loudly.

Linley was completely lost in the awe-inspiring sight before him. A ‘dragon passageway’ that was tens of thousands of kilometers long and which coiled through the mountains, with castles and estates surrounding its perimeter and which formed a perfect whole with it.

In front of the dragon’s head was an enormous golden castle, which looked like a dragon pearl.

“The aura and majesty alone far surpasses any clan that I’ve ever seen.” Linley was truly stunned.

The Four Divine Beasts clan had originally dominated the Four Higher Planes and Seven Divine Planes. Even after their fall, they wouldn’t forget the former glory of their clan. Naturally, they cared deeply about the construction of their clan’s headquarters.

Although they had seen it from afar, Linley’s group had to fly for quite a while before arriving at the base of the Skyrite Mountains.

Standing at the base of the mountains, Linley’s group stared afar through the ‘dragon passageway’, staring at the many patrolling soldiers dressed in azure armor. For a moment, they felt their hearts clench. At a glance, the warriors here were more than ten thousand in number.

But Linley’s group could tell that every single one of them was a Highgod!

“So many experts!” Tarosse sighed in amazement. “The Four Divine Beasts clan really lives up to its name. At least in the number of Highgod warriors, it isn’t the slightest bit inferior to the Bagshaw clan.”

“This is a true, powerful, great clan.” Dylin sighed in amazement as well.

Salomon’s ‘Boyd’ clan had been decent, but these clans, when compared to the Bagshaw clan or the Four Divine Beasts clan, were nothing at all. Look at the Bagshaw clan or the Four Divine Beasts clan; every single soldier in their clan army was a Highgod.

“This is the Azure Dragon clan!” Linley felt his blood pumping. “My roots, the roots of my Baruch clan!”

This seemingly endless dragon passageway gave Linley such a familiar feeling, one which made the blood in his veins thunder. It was a feeling akin to when the prodigal son returned home. The sense of belonging was extremely strong.

“Linley.” Delia held Linley’s hand.

Linley turned to glance at Delia. The two, looking at each other, couldn’t help but laugh. They had experienced nearly seven centuries of turbulence. When they had first come to the Infernal Realm, Linley was just a Demigod. But now, he could effortlessly kill ordinary Highgods.

They had made their way over. And now, finally, they had reached their destination.

The root and foundation of the Four Supreme Warriors!

The legendary Four Divine Beasts clan’s gathering point: The Indigo Prefecture’s ‘Skyrite Mountains’!

“Who goes there!” A loud shout from up above.

From the wide dragon passageway, ten soldiers who had previously been on patrol flew over, and the captain of the squad barked, “This is an important area of my Azure Dragon clan. You need to leave immediately.”

Laughing, Linley replied, “Gentlemen, I myself am a branch member of the Azure Dragon clan. I have been in the Infernal Realm for a very long time, but I’ve finally made it here.”

“Hurry up and welcome us.” Bebe said loudly. “It’s been so long, and we’ve really been exhausted.”

“You belong to a branch of my Redding clan?” The captain looked at Linley dubiously. “Kid, the members of my clan returned a long, long time ago.” The other members of the patrol didn’t quite believe it either.

“You should know that our Azure Dragon clan is capable of Dragonforming.” One of the patrolling soldiers said.

Linley laughed.

“Crackle...” Immediately, azure-golden draconic scales sprouted from everywhere on Linley’s body, and a spike emerged from his forehead. Linley’s dark golden eyes stared at the captain. “Now, do you believe me?”

Those patrolling soldiers all began to laugh as well.

The captain was also all smiles. “Indeed! And judging from your body’s aura, it seems as though you come from a fairly pure lineage. But how come you have those spikes on your back? Still, there’s no mistaking that aura.”

Dragonforming was a very simple way by which one could tell if one was a member of the Azure Dragon clan or not.

The Draconians of the ‘beastmen’ race were completely different from the Dragonform of the Azure Dragon clan. In terms of both power as well as aura, the difference was tremendous. They just looked a bit similar.

“Haha, brother, you’ve had an arduous trip.” The captain immediately laughed and went to welcome them, saying in a sincere voice, “When our clan retreated from the various planes, we really were in too much of a rush. Most likely, at that time, you weren’t able to come back with everyone else at the time.”

The captain let out a long sigh.

“At that time, our main army returned as well, but it was disastrous. That year, my brother died in battle.” Tears glimmered at the corner of the captain’s eyes. “Let’s go. Let’s go home! At home, you’ll be safe.”

The two words, “go home”, caused Linley to tremble with emotion.

“These friends of mine came alongside me.” Linley said.

“Them?” The captain frowned.

“What is it?” Linley was puzzled.

The captain said with a frown. “These are your friends, and you plan to live with them?”

“Right.” Linley nodded. “They risked life and death to travel with me. It would be good if we can live together. What, is that forbidden?”

“It’s not that it cannot be done.” The captain reflected for a moment, then said, “The administrative rules of our clan are quite strict. If it was just you by yourself, you would receive a superb welcome, but if you want to bring them in, you’ll have to live in a fairly distant, remote part of the Skyrise Mountains.”

“Remote is fine with me.” Linley shook his head.

“That’s fine then.” The captain nodded, then laughed. “Come, go with me to register yourself. We’ll investigate what branch you belong to. Hey, you guys can come along as well.” The captain addressed Tarosse and Bebe and the others.

Linley’s group immediately flew in along with the ten patrol soldiers.

“Brother, my name is Yeer [Yi’er]. I came back from the Divine Fire Plane. Which plane are you from? How could your lineage be so pure?” While walking, the captain asked in a warm, friendly manner.

“Right, which plane are you from?” The other patrolling soldiers laughed as well.

“I, I’m from the Yulan Plane.” Linley laughed.

The captain’s expression instantly hardened, and the same thing happened with the other soldiers.

“Seize them!” Captain Yeer shouted icily, and immediately, the other nine patrolling soldiers moved aside as fast as lightning, immediately surrounding Linley’s group of people. From higher up the ‘dragon passageway’, many patrolling soldiers who saw these going-on’s immediately flew over as well.

Linley’s group was stupefied.

“Hey, what’s this all about?” Bebe immediately shouted.

Linley just looked at the captain. “Captain Yeer, what’s going on? Why are you suddenly seizing me?”

Captain Yeer said calmly, “Sorry, brother! The Azure Dragon ‘Redding’ clan, although spread out across many planes, is only spread out across the Higher Planes and the Divine Planes. I’ve never heard of a Yulan Plane.”

“Aren’t I a member of the Azure Dragon clan?” Linley asked.

“You are. I’m certain of this.” Yeer nodded.

“However, if we can’t be completely certain of your history and which lineage you belong to, then you can’t be completely trusted either.” The captain said emotionlessly. “Some members were scattered across the multiverse when they were young, and were raised by other clans, who trained them and then sent them back to be spies! This has happened more than once.”

In the past ten thousand years, the Azure Dragon clan had become exceedingly cautious. Because...they had suffered too much previously when they weren’t.

“You suspect me of being a spy?” Linley found it hard to believe.

“Captain Yeer, if I were a spy, I wouldn’t say I’m from the Yulan Plane. I would make up a perfect identity and status.” Linley said urgently.

Delia spoke out as well. “Captain Yeer, you might not have heard of the Yulan Plane lineage, but that doesn’t mean others in your clan haven’t heard of it either. Please go investigate first.”

“Hmph. Which lineage am I unaware of?” Captain Yeer was extremely confident.

“What’s going on here?” A bark rang out from above, and a middle-aged man dressed in light gray robes flew over.

Captain Yeer, upon seeing this person, immediately said with respect, “Milord, there is a person here who claims to be a member of our Azure Dragon clan, and indeed, he has the lineage of the Azure Dragon clan. However, he claims he is from the Yulan Plane lineage. I have never heard that our clan has a branch in a ‘Yulan Plane’.”

“Oh?” The middle-aged man looked towards Linley’s group in astonishment.

“The Yulan Plane branch?” The middle-aged man looked towards them. “Who?”

“Me.” Linley stood up.

The middle-aged man laughed. “Right, our Azure Dragon clan does in fact have a branch on the Yulan Plane.”

Captain Yeer and the other soldiers were all surprised.

“This was something from six thousand years ago. Not many people know this.” The middle-aged man said with a calm laugh. “Their branch called themselves the ‘Baruch’ clan. Quite peculiar. Nobody knows which elder ended up starting up this branch.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 5,

Baruch

When Linley heard them mention the ‘Baruch clan’, his heart relaxed. His ancestors in the Baruch clan were in the Infernal Realm after all, and they really were here. For a moment, a hundred emotions mixed in Linley’s heart.

“Right, right. The Baruch clan.” Bebe was unspeakably delighted. “Boss, we finally found them.”

“Linley.” Delia felt happy for Linley as well.

The nearby Olivier, O’Brien, Tarosse, and Dylin were all smiles as well. The Baruch clan, in the Yulan continent, was so very famous, but this was the first time they had heard others speak of it in the Infernal Realm.

“Linley, congratulations.” Dylin laughed.

“There’s no mistaking it this time.” Cesar and the others laughed as well.

Linley was jubilant. He had been guided by the teachings of his clan since he was young, and Linley clearly knew what the ancestors of the clan had done. And now, today, he was finally going to meet with the ancestors of his clan.

“Milord, I belong to the Baruch clan. Please hurry and take me to see the ancestors of my clan.” Linley couldn’t help but say.

“Impudence!” Captain Yeer let out a cold snort.

Linley was startled.

“Do you know what status his lordship has? Him, personally take you there?” Captain Yeer was very unhappy that this person in front of him didn’t understand the differences in status between them. “As for whether or not you belong to the Yulan branch, everything will be made clear soon. Don’t be too happy too early.”

The middle-aged man chuckled. “Yeer, you can make the trip yourself.” After speaking, the middle-aged man turned and flew away.

Yeer looked coldly at Linley’s group. “All of you, listen up. Later, when we enter the inner reaches of the Skyrite Mountains, don’t fly around randomly. Follow me! If you bump into or disturb the high level members of our clan, when they look for someone to blame, I won’t be able to protect you.”

“Understood.”

But Linley could sense how strict ranks were within the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“Follow me.” Yeer flew up ahead, while Linley’s group immediately followed. The Skyrite Mountains were exceedingly vast, and the eastern part of them was the place where the Azure Dragon clan’s clansmen lived.

Linley and the others travelled through the ‘dragon passageway’.

The dragon passageway was fifty meters wide, while the edges of it were carved draconic scales. This tens of thousands of kilometers long, coiling dragon passageway, rose and fell as it winded through the mountains. Countless estates and castles were erected by the side of this dragon passageway, with human figures visible within all of them.

“Boss, there’s so many people here.” Bebe’s eyes rolled in their sockets. “As I see it, the Azure Dragon clan has to have at least a million people in it. Boss, as I recall, your clan seems to be unable to produce many children.”

Linley chuckled.

Indeed. The more powerful a race or clan was, the smaller their population was.

“But as time goes on, the accumulated population will still be a large figure.” Linley said casually.

Hypothetically, a new generation might be born every hundred years.

Each member might have one or two children. As time went on, especially as hundreds of millions of years passed, how many clan members would a clan have? After all, upon reaching the Saint level, one wouldn’t die of old age.

Only by being killed.

“After being born, we still have to survive.” Captain Yeer said from up ahead. “In the past, our Four Divine Beasts clan was very powerful and was capable of protecting all of our descendants. Naturally, our population grew greater and greater. But now, it isn’t so simple.”

Linley couldn’t help but grow puzzled.

What exactly had caused the Four Divine Beasts clan to fall?

“That castle is so beautiful.” Delia said gently into Linley’s ears. Linley turned and saw a completely blue castle, with only variations in the deepness or lightness of the coloration, creating a very unique, beautiful appearance that was indeed quite mesmerizing.

“Remember, just fly on Dragon Avenue and don’t fly elsewhere.” Yeer warned.

Bebe snorted, and Linley couldn’t help but look towards Bebe and laugh. “Bebe, our clan’s rules are a bit strict. When we are back to our own residence, things will be better.” Linley was currently in a very good mood.

“I know.” Bebe sent back through divine sense.

While chatting, Linley, under the guidance of Yeer, arrived through Dragon Avenue at a very ordinary two-story building created halfway up a mountain. This two story building had a white-haired elder slouching over a chair with half-lidded eyes, seemingly quite relaxed.

“Hanuman [Ha’ne’man].” Yeer laughed.

The white-haired elder opened his eyes, then laughed and stood up. “Oh, Yeer, it’s you. Why’d you come to my place today?”

“We just met a member of our clan who has our lineage. Please help out by going with us for an investigation and a registration.” Yeer explained.

“Which one?” The white-haired elder turned to look at Linley’s group.

“Him!” Yeer pointed at Linley, who laughed and said to the white-haired elder, ‘Mr. Hanuman, I am Linley. I come from the Baruch clan of the Yulan Plane!’”

“Oh, Baruch clan? The branch from the Yulan continent. I know.” Hanuman’s eyebrows danced, and he began to laugh. “Our Azure Dragon clan is also known as the Redding clan. Virtually all of our branches refer to ourselves as the ‘Redding clan’, and only a very few branches who don’t know the real name will casually choose a name for themselves. Your Baruch clan is one of them.”

Linley could only grin.

The first generation of his clan, Baruch, didn’t know of the Azure Dragon clan, nor that they were members of the Redding clan. Thus, he had founded his Baruch clan.

“For you to be able to report that you are a member of the Baruch clan...I trust that you are a member of our clan.” Hanuman shook his head helplessly. “However, the clan has rules. We must undergo a strict test, therefore...I need you to go meet with your ancestors.”

“Meet with my ancestors?” Linley was beginning to grow excited.

“Right. You have to meet them in order to completely ascertain your identity.” Hanuman then looked towards Yeer. “Yeer, your role is done. You go take care of your business. I’ll accompany them.”

Yeer nodded, then left.

“It’s rare to encounter a lost clan member who returns to us, even in a thousand year span.” Hanuman sighed. “Let’s go. Follow me. Let’s go meet the ancestors of your branch.”

Linley hurriedly followed him, while the group behind Linley began to chat amongst themselves.

“The Four Supreme Warriors of the past...the Dragonblood Warrior, ‘Baruch’. It’s been nearly six thousand years since I’ve seen him.” Cesar had a rare smile on his face. “I wonder how those old fellows are doing these days.”

O’Brien nodded as well.

“Old fellows?” Hanuman, walking up ahead, turned and frowned. “The oldest member of the Yulan continent branch is just six thousand years old. And you call him an ‘old fellow’? In our clan, I don’t even know how many members have trained for hundreds of millions of years. The Yulan continent branch, in our Redding clan, is a very young branch.”

“Very young branch?”

Linley’s group looked at each other.

In the Yulan continent, thousands of years of history definitely could be considered a very long history. But in the Infernal Realm, thousands of years was just ‘very young’. Compared to the other branches, which were hundreds of millions old, they were indeed very young.

“Old sir,” Bebe called out, “We see many castles and estates everywhere throughout the mountain ranges, with so many people. Old sir, do you clearly remember where the Yulan continent’s branch lives?”

“How could I not!”

Hanuman stared. “Even with my eyes closed, I, Hanuman, can easily find the residences of any of our Redding clan’s various branches or of our ultimate experts.”

“But we’ve been flying on this Dragon Avenue for so long. How come we aren’t there yet?” Bebe muttered.

Hanuman couldn’t help but frown at Bebe. “Kid with the straw hat, in this group, it seems you are the most talkative.”

“Bebe.” Linley said softly.

“Hmph.” Bebe let out a low snort, not daring to say another word.

Only now did Hanuman say, “The Yulan continent branch is a very weak branch. These weak, small branches are located deep in the border areas. That’s why it takes some time to fly there. We haven’t even flown a tenth of the way there.”

After flying for a long time, and after having seen more than a hundred thousand patrolling soldiers, Linley’s group finally reached their destination.

“Here we are.” Hanuman immediately flew out of the Dragon Avenue. “Follow me.”

Linley’s group had also discovered that not too far away, there was a large gorge. Hanuman was flying straight for that gorge, and so Linley’s group followed him in as well. The gorge had fog and mist within.

While descending through it, they passed through the foggy mist and could vaguely see some small buildings up ahead.

“This place contains your Yulan branch, as well as some other branches.” Hanuman said. “This gorge has in total more than ten thousand people.”

“Baruch!” Hanuman suddenly shouted loudly.

“Baruch!” “Baruch!” “Baruch!” The entire gorge reverberated with this shout, and Linley’s group was badly startled by Hanuman’s sudden shout.

They landed on the flat ground in the gorge.

From afar, dozens of figures flew over at high speed, the leader being a muscular man with powerful, protruding chest muscles and a sleeveless shirt. His brown hair was rather mussed, and his eyes flowed with wisdom.

“Haha, so it is Mr. Hanuman.” The muscular, brown-haired man laughed in a loud voice.

A group of people followed him from behind. Most of them had long brown hair, with a few having golden hair or blue hair.

Linley stared at this group of people.

“He is Baruch? The founder of my Baruch clan?” Linley’s heart felt as though it had been struck by a massive hammer. The dozens of people who had flown over were mostly men, with a few women as well.

Linley, seeing them, had a familiar feeling appear in his heart.

“Baruch.” Hanuman laughed. “Today, I’ve come because a member of our clan says that he is from the Yulan continent and that he is from your Baruch clan.”

Linley's eyes were shining.

Indeed, the man in front was Baruch! The founder of the Dragonblood Warrior clan!

"From the Yulan continent?" Baruch was stunned, and then wild joy appeared in his eyes.

"Someone came from the Yulan continent? And says that he is of our Baruch clan?" A muscular, handsome youth by Baruch's side hurriedly spoke out as well, while at the same time, he swept the group of people behind Hanuman with his gaze.

As though he sensed something, his gaze fell on Linley!

This was the call of blood ties.

But Baruch's gaze fell on another person – Cesar!

"Cesar! It's you!" Baruch was amazed and delighted.

"Haha, Baruch, I didn't expect that after you suddenly disappeared, you old fellow, you actually had run off to the Infernal Realm." Cesar laughed as well.

"O'Brien?" Baruch then looked at the War God, 'O'Brien'.

"Baruch, long time no see." O'Brien greeted him as well.

Hanuman intentionally said in an unhappy manner, "Hey? I'm here today to verify this person's status and see if he is a member of your clan. Baruch, give me a hand and help me confirm his identity."

"Oh." Only now did Baruch come to himself.

"He is Linley." Hanuman laughed. "He says he is of the Baruch clan." As he spoke, he pointed towards Linley.

Immediately, the group of people behind Baruch all turned their gazes towards Linley. These elders had gazes filled with incomparable ardor. They hadn't been back for thousands of years. The return of a descendant of their clan naturally made them excited.

Actually, upon seeing Cesar and O'Brien, Baruch was already certain that this 'Linley' should definitely be a descendant of his clan.

"Please help verify him." Hanuman said.

Baruch nodded, then looked at Linley. "Linley, right? If you are a member of my Baruch clan, then you should know...that in our clan's ancestral hall, there are recordings regarding the generations of ancestors of the clan."

Linley opened his mouth and began to speak.

"Baruch, the very first Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. In the year 4560 of the Yulan calendar, outside the walls of the city of Linnan, Baruch did battle against a Black Dragon and a Titanic Frost Wurm. In the end, he slew both the Titanic Frost Wurm and the Black Dragon, causing his fame to be spread across the world. In the year 4579 of the Yulan calendar, along the coastline of the northern sea of the continent, Baruch did battle against a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor. On that day, the waves crashed unceasingly and nearby cities crumbled, but after a vicious fight lasting a full day and night, Baruch finally executed the

Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor...finally, Baruch founded the Baruch clan, and became the first leader of the Baruch clan!”

“Ryan Baruch...”

“Hazard Baruch...”

Linley described the affairs of three ancestors in succession. Baruch and the group of people behind him were all so excited that their eyes turned moist.

“Right. Right.” Baruch said hurriedly.

Baruch strode forward and immediately enfolded Linley into his arms. “Child, welcome home.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 6, The Weakest, Smallest Branch

“Welcome home!” These words caused a hot feeling to gush forth from Linley’s chest.

Feeling the caring gaze of the Baruch clansmen on him, Linley suddenly realized that the difficulties he had endured through the nearly seven hundred years he had spent in the Redbud Continent, traversing the Starmist Sea, and hurrying through the Bloodridge Continent was all worth it!

After wandering in the Infernal Realm for so many years, he had finally returned home!

Baruch released Linley, then looked at Linley, his fierce face hiding unshed tears. “Linley, you must’ve had a rough time of it.”

“Mr. Hanuman, thank you.” Baruch looked towards Hanuman. “This Linley is indeed of my Yulan continent branch.”

“Haha, Baruch, congratulations. Here is the emblem of our clan. Let Linley bind it with blood.” Hanuman handed out an emblem, then laughed and said, “I won’t disturb you further.” As he spoke, Hanuman flew away and departed.

Baruch gave the emblem to Linley.

“Bind it with blood?” Linley studied the emblem.

“This shows your status as a clansman. All members of the clan have it.” Baruch explained, and Linley immediately bound it with blood. In the instant that he did, Linley found out to his astonishment...

That he could actually sense the emblems which others carried.

“Indeed, by relying on this, one can easily differentiate whether or not someone is a member of the clan.”

“Linley.” Behind Baruch, that handsome youth was all smiles. “Do you know who I am?”

Linley couldn’t help but be startled. He had never before met any of the ancestors of his clan. How could he know their name or identities?

“My name is Ryan.” The handsome youth said. “You were talking about my affairs, just now.”

Only now did Linley understand, and he laughed, “Our first Golden Dragonrider Saint of the Baruch clan!”

“Haha, Golden Dragonrider Saint. Right, right.” Ryan began to laugh loudly. “Just now, you mentioned myself and Hazard. Hazard, come here.” Behind Ryan was a muscular man with light golden hair.

“Linley, hello.” Hazard said.

Linley opened his mouth, but Linley suddenly realized that he had no idea how he should address them.

Hazard was his great great great...grandpa?

Whether it was Baruch or Ryan or Hazard, all of them were many generations senior to Linley.

Seeing the look on Linley's face, Baruch was able to guess what Linley was thinking. He laughed, "Linley, in material planes, people's lifespan are not very long, so generational questions matter. In the Infernal Realm, however, there are many who have lived for over a hundred million years. Caring about generations is no longer meaningful."

"Look, in our Azure Dragon clan, which has existed for countless billions of years, there might be a gap hundred million generations between an elder and a junior. Tell me, what's the point?"

Once things got to a certain level, it became pointless.

For example, in the Yulan continent and the O'Brien Empire.

The War God had many descendants. After five thousand years, his descendants were simply too many, and so O'Brien himself didn't care much about them. Of the disciples he had accepted, the eldest were almost as old as him, while the youngest were comparable to Linley. There could be a gap of five thousand years.

But despite such a huge gap, they still simply viewed themselves as fellow apprentices.

"The Azure Dragon clan has set its roots and scattered its leaves in very many places. It's possible that two people who were born at the exact same time might be technically separated by countless 'generations' in the family hierarchy." Baruch laughed. "Thus, not just in our own family, in the entire Infernal Realm, which 'generation' one is in doesn't matter much."

Linley nodded in agreement as well.

"Boss, Grandpa Beirut and I are separated by I don't even know how many generations, but I still just call him Grandpa." Bebe said. "Also, Beirut's three sons. I just call them by their names."

Bebe was a member of Beirut's clan, after all. Technically speaking, he could be considered a descendant of Harry and his brothers.

But because the difference between them in the generational hierarchy was simply too great, Bebe just addressed them by their names.

"Haha." Ryan laughed. "Linley, at first, we had headaches as well over this matter, but now we are all accustomed to it. All members of the Azure Dragon clan just address each other casually. The only thing that matters for status is one's power!"

If one was powerful, one would be at a higher level in the clan. Even if one was very senior in terms of the hierarchy but had remained a God despite training for trillions of years while another had trained for just ten thousand years to become a Highgod, one had to bow respectfully when seeing that Highgod.

"You can just address me as clan leader. As for the others, you can call them by their names." Baruch laughed.

"Call them by their names?" Linley felt that it was awkward.

"Of course." Hazard laughed. "You've reached the God level, but most likely were born within the past thousand years. Dozens of years ago, I had another daughter. She is much younger than you. Are you supposed to address her as 'ancestor'?"

Linley could only laugh.

To these people who had unlimited lifespan, generational hierarchies really did become meaningless.

“Anyone who isn’t directly within three generations of you can simply be addressed by name.” Hazard said.

“Everyone, stop standing there. Come to the main hall.” Baruch laughed, and Linley followed them deeper in, chatting with everyone while walking. Linley also introduced Delia and Bebe.

“Clan leader.” Linley asked, “How many people does our Yulan branch have?”

“A few hundred people.” Baruch laughed as he looked around. “However, in this gorge, there’re a few other branches as well. Our Yulan branch is a very small branch.” But there was something which Baruch had not said...

That his branch was the weakest, smallest branch.

“Baruch, you seem to be in a good mood?” A teasing voice rang out.

The faces of Baruch and the others immediately became rather unpleasant. Linley turned to look at the source of the voice. From not too far away, a few people walked over, the leader a youth with long green hair. The youth had a rather mocking smile on his face. “What happy affair has happened? Tell us and let us hear it.”

“Ignore them. Let’s go!” Baruch said in a low voice.

Linley noticed as well that the other clansmen didn’t look at that green haired youth at all, continuing towards their residence.

“Baruch, I’m talking to you. Why the ugly face?” The green-haired youth shouted with a frown.

The youths behind the green-haired youth seemed to be quite dissatisfied with Baruch as well, one of them snorting, “Baruch, what, are you going to be so arrogant, just because you have someone supporting you? You aren’t going to even pay attention to us when we speak with you?”

The faces of Baruch, Ryan, and the others were exceedingly ugly to behold.

In the Azure Dragon clan, the Yulan branch was the weakest one. When they had been brought over, they had all been Saints. After undergoing the Ancestral Baptism and hard training, although they had made great improvements, the amount of time they had lived was simply too short, just a few thousand years.

Even the strongest member of the Yulan branch was just at the God level!

God?

In the Infernal Realm, especially in an ancient clan like the Four Divine Beasts clan, if even the strongest person in a branch was still just a ‘God’, then it was all but guaranteed that this branch would be viewed in contempt, be mocked, be satire!

The other branches all had many Highgods.

But yours only had Gods? How could you compete against them? It’d be strange if you aren’t mocked, for that matter!

Although everyone in the gorge belonged to a fairly weak branch, at least the other branches had one Highgod!

“Motherf*cker, what’s with all your bullshit?” Bebe shouted angrily.

Tarosse’s face had turned grim as well, and he icily swept these people. “Where have you lot come from, and why are you saying so much bullshit in our place?”

“You...” Those people were stunned, and then infuriated. They had never imagined that in the weakest Yulan branch, the branch which they often mocked and insulted, there would be someone who dared to be so arrogant towards them!

The leading youth began to laugh from rage. “Baruch, your people are quite bold. They dare to insult me, Asru [A’si’lu]!”

Asru himself was a Highgod!

In the Four Divine Beasts clan, being a Highgod didn’t mean much. On the way over through the Dragon Avenue, Linley had seen more than a hundred thousand patrol soldiers, all of whom were Highgods. One could thus imagine how common Highgods were, here!

But...

The Yulan branch didn’t have a single Highgod!

Thus, Asru, as a Highgod, could be arrogant and unbridled in front of the Yulan branch. As for Baruch and the others, they had to just endure it.

“Asru, don’t go too far.” Baruch said in a low voice. “Today, we have guests.”

“I, go too far?” Asru stared.

“Baruch, you’re quite bold. You dare insult Lord Asru?” The people behind Asru called out.

By now, Tarosse and Bebe were unbelievably angry. Tarosse had never viewed an ordinary Highgod with any consideration. “Kid...”

“Shut your mouth!” Asru pointed angrily at Tarosse.

Tarosse was enraged.

Asru laughed coldly, “I know that you others are Highgods. But you don’t seem to be members of our Azure Dragon clan. You are permitted to stay here, where our Azure Dragon clan lives, which is already something you need to feel thankful for. But if you are to fight...the soldiers of the clan will be the first to exterminate you!”

Asru had noticed long ago that Tarosse, Cesar, and the others were Highgods.

But he wasn’t afraid, because this was the territory of the Azure Dragon clan. Through the clan emblem, he had noticed long ago that these were outsiders.

“Cesar, you all, no matter what, cannot fight.” Baruch shook his head and sent mentally, “The reason you can live here is partially due to Linley’s status, and partially because our clan is located in a remote region. But if you were to fight...regardless of whether you were in the right or in the wrong, the clan soldiers will always favor our clansmen. Once you start a fight, they’ll kill you. Linley, look after your people.”

Tarosse, Cesar, and O’Brien were all stunned.

“Don’t worry, clan leader.” Linley replied.

Linley then turned to look at that Asru. Asru was a Highgod? But what was an ordinary Highgod to him? While in the Miluo Island, when he had used the Blackstone Prison, he had committed wanton slaughter when surrounded by tens of thousands of Highgods.

He didn’t even fear tens of thousands of Highgods.

How could he care about this Asru?

“Kid, what are you looking at?” Asru shouted. Asru was in a very bad mood today. This weakest Yulan branch normally was shouted at and mocked by him as he pleased, without saying anything in response. But today, it seemed as though they were being rather arrogant.

“Asru, right?” Linley laughed.

“Right.” Asru raised his chin slightly.

“Linley, don’t cause trouble.” Baruch was rather worried, and he hurriedly sent through divine sense, “The strongest member of our Baruch clan is just a God. Our branch is too weak. We can’t fight with them.”

“Clan leader, I’m a member of the clan. If I were to act against them, the army soldiers wouldn’t favor them, right?” Linley sent through divine sense.

Baruch said, “They won’t favor them, but you are only a Go-...”

Linley immediately turned to look towards Asru. “Asru, I advise you that in the future, after today, you had best not come annoy our Yulan branch.”

“What did you say?” Asru was flabbergasted.

“In the future, don’t annoy us.” Linley said grimly.

Asru stared at Linley, speechless, then raised his head and laughed loudly. “Haha...” Even those youths behind Asru began to laugh loudly.

The Yulan branch was the weakest one in the gorge. They were always picked on and mocked by the other branches. But they were too weak. They couldn’t resist at all.

“Kid, listen up...” Asru pointed at Linley, about to say something. But suddenly...rays of hazy earthen yellow light suddenly sprang up, enveloping Asru and the others.

Blackstone Space – Supergravity!

Asru’s body hunched over and he immediately fell to his knees. The powerful gravity caused his entire body to shudder. The people behind him were even worse; they immediately collapsed at first before then just barely standing up.

“I told you. In the future, don’t annoy my Yulan branch!” Linley’s face sank, and instantly, the earthen yellow light trembled.

The downwards gravitational force transformed into a repulsive force!

“BOOM!” Asru and the others were thrown far away by that repulsive force. From far away, they stared at astonishment and fear towards Linley. Linley hadn’t even moved, but he had been able to easily toy with them.

The difference was too great.

Linley couldn’t be bothered to spare a single extra glance for Asru’s group. He turned towards Baruch and said, “Clan leader, let’s go back.” In Miluo Island, Linley had slaughtered a path through tens of thousands of Highgods. How could he care about a single ordinary Highgod?

“Linley...”

Baruch’s group was completely stunned.

They had yet to understand that from today onwards...the Yulan branch would never be mocked or humiliated again.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 7, The Clan's Crisis

The Azure Dragon clan's Yulan branch simply had too short a history, spanning just a few millennia. A few millennia, in the ancient history of the Four Divine Beasts clan, could be considered a single drop of water in a sea.

A short history resulted in weak power!

In this gorge within the Skyrite Mountains, the other branches of the Azure Dragon tribe looked down on them and mocked them. This was very normal. Fortunately, the clan had very strict rules; members of the same clan were not permitted to kill each other.

This was a very severe rule. Nobody could violate it.

Precisely because of this, although the Yulan branch had lived a life of some embarrassment, they weren't in any mortal danger. Baruch and the others could thus just endure it. After all, if they fought back, they would just be humiliated even further.

They were weaker. There was nothing they could do!

But this descendant of the clan who they were welcoming back, one who had returned from the Yulan branch, had effortlessly toyed with a Highgod and multiple Gods.

Baruch, Ryan, and the others all stared at Linley in disbelief.

"Linley?" Baruch stuttered.

Linley looked at Baruch, then laughed. "Clan leader, let's hurry back. I still don't even know where I'll live?"

"Right, right." Baruch recovered from his shock. Although he didn't understand how Linley could be so powerful, Baruch wouldn't ask right now. He immediately laughed, "Let's go, let's go back."

The other clansmen of the Yulan branch all stared at Linley in amazement. This descendant was too strong!

"What are you looking at?" Bebe's voice rang out. "What? Can it be that after the lesson my Boss just taught you, you haven't had enough? You want to test him again?"

Linley turned to look.

Asru and the others were staring towards Linley with gazes full of shock and fear. They couldn't believe that this was real.

"Asru." Linley spoke out. "You and I are both members of the Azure Dragon clan. We are all members of the Redding clan! Since we are all members of the clan, fighting amongst ourselves will just result in ridicule from others."

Asru was stunned.

“The Yulan branch is also a member of the Redding clan.” Linley laughed calmly. “I’m a member of the Yulan branch, and also a member of the Redding clan. I don’t want to see you causing trouble for us in the future. If something like that happens, then I wouldn’t mind...giving you a good lesson.”

O’Brien, Cesar, Tarosse, and the others were all laughing off to the side.

They knew exactly how powerful Linley was. During the great battle at Miluo Island, Linley’s power had been completely revealed and was unquestionable.

“Let’s go.” Linley held Delia’s hand, then followed Baruch, Ryan, and the other members of the clan towards the abode of the Yulan branch. The only ones left were Asru and the others.

“Lord Asru, this...” A youth behind Asru said, his face filled with disbelief, shock, and anger.

Asru’s face was gloomy.

“Who would have thought that an expert would appear amongst the Yulan branch.” Asru said in a low voice.

“But he’s just a God.” Someone immediately said.

Asru shook his head. “Impossible. That Gravitational Space was powerful to an unheard of level. In such a powerful gravity, he would definitely be able to effortlessly kill us. Only an extremely powerful Highgod could possibly train the Gravitational Space to such a high level.”

“How powerful?” The Gods behind him were all puzzled.

“Six Star Fiend. Perhaps Seven Star Fiend!” Asru said in a low voice.

Immediately, those Gods were completely stupefied. These people, when encountering a Highgod, were normally all very respectful. Generally speaking, Highgods were at the Four Star Fiend level of power. Anyone capable of reaching the Six Star Fiend or Seven Star Fiend level had a high status in the clan.

“But we noticed that he was just a God.” Another blue-haired youth said hurriedly.

Asru turned and glanced at him mockingly, then turned and left, not paying attention to that God at all.

“What’d I say wrong?” The blue-haired man was still lost.

“Can’t you guess that he was hiding his aura and just pretending?” Another God snickered. “Let’s go. I can’t imagine how this short-lived Yulan branch actually produced such a powerful expert.”

While still muttering amongst themselves, those Gods all left.

Linley knew very well that even two brothers of the same mother, much less branches of the same clan, would possibly struggle with each other for status. The weak would be looked down upon and embarrassed.

This was normal.

“The high level members of the Redding family don’t care about this. First, it’s not convenient to interfere. And secondly, they are probably satisfied with the situation.” Linley understood that when the weak were viewed in contempt, this anger at being humiliated would serve as a powerful motivation for the clan to grow stronger.

Perhaps an expert would appear.

In the end, the rules of the clan prohibited clansmen from killing each other. With this rule in place, there would be no fear of the clan losing its power.

“Only when there is competition, when there is a differentiation between the ‘high’ and the ‘low’ levels will there be improvement.” Linley sighed.

Unfortunately, his Yulan branch had become the weakest branch. Its roots were weak and its history was short. There was nothing that could be done.

“Linley, on the other side of the grass is our Yulan branch’s residence.” Baruch pointed towards the front. Linley, looking in that direction, saw that at the end of the short grass, there were multiple two story buildings, as all a palace which took up a very wide amount of space.

When Linley’s group passed through the grass, quite a few men and women came to welcome them, including two children.

“Clan leader!”

The group all hurriedly welcomed them.

“Haha, hurry up and prepare a feast for celebrating Linley’s arrival.” Baruch laughed loudly.

“Clan leader, who is Linley?” Nobody here recognized Linley.

Linley looked carefully at this group of people. All of them had an aura which felt so familiar to his soul. These were people from his clan, people of his blood. “Our Baruch clan has so few people in the Yulan continent, but in the Infernal Realm, we are much more populous.”

All of them in the Infernal Realm possessed unlimited lifespan. Naturally, their numbers would continuously grow.

“Who is Linley?” Baruch immediately laughed. “He is someone from our Yulan branch.”

“He came over from the Yulan continent.” Ryan added. “Look closely. He is Linley. Don’t misrecognize him in the future.” As he spoke, he rested his hand on Linley’s shoulder.

Immediately, everyone looked towards Linley while a commotion broke out.

“He came from the Yulan continent?”

“He actually came from the Yulan continent. Hey, Linley, how’s our Baruch clan doing?”

“Linley, do you know ‘Bozart’ [Bo’sai’tē]? He’s my son!”

The group of them all excitedly asked questions nonstop. In the Infernal Realm, they were the weakest branch of the Four Divine Beasts clan. In the Yulan continent, however, they were the ‘Dragonblood Warrior clan’ which had dominated the continent.

The humiliation which they now had to endure naturally made them think all the more of their glory days in the Yulan continent.

They were filled with longing for the Yulan continent.

“If all of you ask questions en masse like this, how is Linley going to respond?” Baruch snorted coldly. “Enough of this. Hurry up and prepare a banquet. Today, every member of our Yulan branch is going to get together for the banquet. During the banquet itself, you can ask your questions.”

“I’ll go arrange the banquet.” Immediately, a brown-haired woman laughed while flashing Linley a smile.

Not just this woman; many of the other members of the clan were all smiling towards Linley. They naturally were very welcoming towards their clansmen who had come from the Yulan continent!

The clan’s banquet was attended by every single member of the Yulan branch. Hundreds of people thus squeezed into the palace, but fortunately, the palace was very large, allowing everyone a place to sit. During the course of the banquet, the atmosphere was very lively.

After all, of the hundreds of people present, only a few dozen actually came from the Yulan continent. The others had been born in the Infernal Realm.

They were thus very curious regarding the root of the Yulan branch, the ‘Yulan continent’.

As for the ones who had actually come from the Yulan continent, such as Baruch, Ryan, and the others, they were also very interested in learning the situation of the descendants of their clan. This entire banquet all but turned into a story-telling time for Linley, Cesar, and the others, and Cesar and O’Brien talked nonstop regarding all sorts of matters which had occurred in the Yulan continent.

At the same time, they also told the story of how Linley had risen to sudden prominence in the Yulan continent.

Master sculptor, Grand Magus Saint, Dragonblood Warrior...

Linley’s story caused many of the descendants of the clan in the Infernal Realm to be filled with envy. Although they, too, were powerful, in the Four Divine Beasts clan, they were just the bottom tier. How could they compare to Linley’s resplendence?

By the time the banquet concluded, it was dark. Only now did the group of clansmen part from Linley.

Ryan led Linley and the others to their residence.

“Linley, these three buildings are for you all to live in. You make the arrangements for who lives where.” Ryan said warmly.

“Right. No need to trouble you. I’ll make the arrangements.” Linley laughed.

Ryan smiled, then left, while Linley, Delia, Bebe, O’Brien...the group finally let out sighs of relief.

“The banquet finally came to an end.” O’Brien laughed, then let out a sigh. “Despite having been in the Infernal Realm for so long, I’ve never spoken so much in one breath. Linley, these clansmen of yours truly are quite curious regarding the Yulan continent.”

“The vast majority of them have never been to the Yulan continent before. Of course they are curious.”

Linley laughed. “Enough. Everyone, go get some rest. Everyone can choose their own residence.” In the end, Linley, Delia, and Bebe took one building, Olivier, O’Brien, Cesar, and Tarosse took a second building, while Dylin and his two sons took a building.”

A quiet night.

Linley and Delia were in each other's arms on the bed, smiles on their faces.

"Linley, are you very happy right now?" Delia said softly.

"Right." Thinking back to the banquet that day, and that scene of how those clansmen all asked him all sorts of questions, Linley couldn't help but laugh. "When I was with those clansmen, I felt as though I returned to a large family. It truly was wonderful! If my father could see them as well, he definitely would feel very happy and very content."

Linley still remembered how his father had dreamed all his life to restore the clan to glory.

His dying wish was that the weapon of the clan leader, Baruch, be returned.

"Right. If your father knew, he would definitely be very happy." Delia said. "If your father knew what you had done over these years, he would definitely be very proud." Delia rested her head against Linley's chest.

Linley held Delia in his arms.

"I rather miss Sasha and Taylor." Delia said.

Linley couldn't help but think of his own son and daughter. Who knew what was going on back in the Yulan continent?

"Delia." Linley suddenly said.

"What is it?" Delia raised her head.

"Let's try and see if we can have another one, shall we? Maybe we'll succeed." Linley said slyly. Delia was startled, and then her face reddened as she looked at Linley. Linley chortled, then lowered his head to kiss Delia...

Dawn. Linley got out of bed and headed to his residence's gate.

"The morning air is excellent." Linley watched as the fog swirled around in the gorge. From afar, various buildings could dimly be seen, and that coiling 'Dragon Avenue' could be seen in the skies. Given his visual acuity, he was able to even see those patrol warriors on Dragon Avenue.

"This is my Four Divine Beasts clan!"

Linley sighed in his heart.

Linley suddenly had a feeling, and he turned to look. Not far away, a figure was walking towards him. It was the clan leader of the Yulan branch, Baruch. Baruch's face was covered in smiles. "Linley!"

"Clan leader." Linley hurriedly went to greet him.

"Come. Let's find a place to chat. There's something I need to discuss with you." Baruch said.

"How about right here at my place?" Linley said.

Baruch glanced around, then nodded. "Might as well. There's no outsiders here at your place. No need to worry about others overhearing."

Linley was rather surprised. From what Baruch was saying, it seemed as though they were going to discuss a rather important matter. Linley immediately led Baruch towards his own living place, then to a study within.

Linley and Baruch both sat down.

“Clan leader, you can go ahead.” Linley said.

Baruch looked towards Linley. Pausing a moment, he then said, “Linley, first tell me, are you a God or a Highgod.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 8, The Secrets of the Ancestral Baptism!

Asking about his strength?

Linley looked at Baruch. After a momentary pause, he said, “I am a God!”

A look of surprise appeared on Baruch’s face, and then he immediately sighed in praise, “Linley, you, a God, were able to effortlessly defeat that Asru. This is simply inconceivable. How did you accomplish this?”

Linley, for a moment, didn’t know how to reply.

The reason why he, a God, was so powerful actually had many components.

“Oh.” Baruch seemed to have realized that he had asked a question that he shouldn’t have asked. He laughed, “Enough about that. Since you are so formidable as a God, once you become a Highgod, you will definitely become a true expert of our Azure Dragon clan. Since that’s the case, there are some things which I will tell you in advance.”

Linley listened intently.

“These affairs, our Azure Dragon clan generally won’t tell some of the weaker clansmen.” Baruch sighed.

Linley couldn’t help but feel puzzled. “Weak people? But the clan leader himself is just a God. How does he know?” As Linley said it, in the Four Divine Beasts clan, the Baruch clan was indeed a very weak, small clan.

Baruch just continued. “Linley, do you know how resplendent and glorious our Four Divine Beasts clan was in the past?”

“I know.” Linley nodded. “I read a book introducing the Four Divine Beasts clan. In the past, the power of the Four Divine Beasts clan spread across all Four Higher Planes and multiple Divine Planes. But it seems as though ten thousand years ago, all of our clan’s forces withdrew from the other planes and regrouped here in the Infernal Realm.”

“Right.”

Baruch sighed. “Our Four Divine Beasts clan’s power was spread across the Four Higher Planes. But do you know why our clan was so powerful to begin with?”

Linley shook his head.

Linley was puzzled about this as well. Why were they so mighty?

“Let me tell you. The reason our Four Divine Beasts clan was, in the past, so strong, was because...” Baruch’s eyes shone, and his breathing became more ragged as well. His face also turned red from excitement. “The ancestors of our Four Divine Beasts clan were four Sovereigns!!!”

“What?!” Linley felt completely stunned.

“Clan leader, what did you just say? Sovereigns? Did I mishear?” Linley said hurriedly.

Sovereigns were far above all other life forms, whom they gaze down at from up above. Even the most powerful Infernal Asuras or Purgatory Commanders, in front of a Sovereign, were like ants. With but a thought, a Sovereign could kill an Asura.

The ancestors of his clan were Sovereigns?

The ancestors of the Four Divine Beasts clan were four Sovereigns?

“Right! You heard correctly!” Baruch said solemnly. “The ancestors of our Four Divine Beasts clan were four Sovereigns. The four mighty Sovereigns were a very tight-knit group, and the descendants of their Four Divine Beasts clan, which they raised, were naturally powerful to begin with. When they were present, the assistance the four ancestors provided allowed their clan to dominate the major planes with utter invincibility!”

Linley felt as though his mind was in a state of chaos.

Sovereign? And four of them?

It must be understood that the seven elements of earth, fire, water, wind, lightning, light, and darkness, each only had seven Sovereigns! The Sovereigns were scattered throughout the various Divine Planes and Four Higher Planes. And, for creatures as proud as them, it was very hard for alliances to form.

But four Sovereigns had joined forces. It would be a strange thing if the Four Divine Beasts clan wasn't mighty!

Most likely, the other Sovereigns also wouldn't be willing to offend these four Sovereigns without a good reason.

“The ancestor of our Azure Dragon clan was a water-type Sovereign. The ancestor of the White Tiger clan was a wind-type Sovereign, while the ancestor of the Vermilion Bird clan was a fire-type Sovereign. As for the Black Tortoise clan's ancestor, that was an earth-type Sovereign!” Baruch said solemnly.

Linley's mind was reeling.

Sovereigns were so far above them, and yet behind the Four Divine Beasts clan, there had been four Sovereigns!

It would be impossible for the Four Divine Beasts clan to be weak, even if they wanted to be.

“If that was still the case, our Four Divine Beasts clan would still be invincible throughout the various planes! But all of this changed, roughly eleven thousand years ago!” Baruch said.

Linley also knew that roughly ten thousand years ago, a tremendous change happened to the Four Divine Beasts clan. What type of change, exactly, had caused his clan to fall?

For all four of the Sovereign's clans to simultaneously weaken...there was, most likely, just one possible explanation. The power backing the Four Divine Beasts clan had been destroyed! As he thought of this possibility, Linley found it to be unbelievable. “Who could possibly defeat four mighty Sovereigns? Impossible! Absolutely impossible!”

Although he thought this, he still looked at Baruch, waiting for Baruch's answer!

“The four ancestors are all dead!” Baruch said hoarsely.

Linley couldn't help but stop breathing.

So that really was the case!

"Four Sovereigns...all died? How is that possible?" Linley said hurriedly. To kill a Sovereign, one had to at least be at the Sovereign level, but the four ancestors of the Four Divine Beasts clan represented four full Sovereigns!

Who could kill four Sovereigns?

"They did indeed perish." Baruch said helplessly. "Although we don't know the reason for their death, there is no question about the fact that the four ancestors are dead! And precisely because the four ancestors are dead, our Four Divine Beasts clan's moment of crisis arrived!"

"Crisis?" Linley frowned.

"Right." Baruch furrowed his forehead in worry. "The four ancestors were all on very good terms with each other. The four of them, all Sovereigns, had existed for countless years, causing the Four Divine Beasts clan and its members to be extremely arrogant and overbearing."

Linley nodded to himself. With four Sovereigns as ancestors, how could the Four Divine Beasts clan not be arrogant!

"Wherever there are people, there are struggles. Because of their arrogance, because of their power! In the past, when the Four Divine Beasts clan struggled against other clans, the Four Divine Beasts clan would naturally be rather overbearing." Baruch said.

Linley understood.

"After countless years, naturally there would often be battle and struggles. The Four Divine Beasts clan had a number of enemies, but the Four Divine Beasts clan never cared, because they were so powerful, they didn't fear their enemies!"

Baruch shook his head. "But then, the four ancestors died!"

Baruch looked towards Linley. "The clans which dared struggle against the Four Divine Beasts clan, even if they were weaker, wouldn't be too much weaker."

Linley nodded in acknowledgment.

"Those clans, in their own planes, were all very formidable. But compared to the Four Divine Beasts clan, there was still quite some difference. After all, behind the Four Divine Beasts clan were four Sovereigns. But once the four Sovereigns died..."

Baruch shook his head and sighed.

Linley began to understand.

"Those clans, in the past, had simply been humiliated too much by the Four Divine Beasts clan." Baruch shook his head. "Once the four Sovereigns died, these clans no longer had any more misgivings. They immediately, wildly began to assault the Four Divine Beasts clan!"

Linley took a deep breath. He could completely imagine the scene.

“Thus, the forces of the Four Divine Beasts clan immediately withdrew, and the descendants in all the planes immediately withdrew and regrouped to the Infernal Realm!” Baruch said solemnly. “Ten thousand years ago, just during the withdrawal process, the number of Highgods which died was an astonishing figure. Even many Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends died.”

Linley’s heart shuddered.

“The Four Divine Beasts clan is strong, extremely strong.” Baruch said. “Originally, when the four ancestors were alive, they naturally cultivated their descendants, causing the Four Divine Beasts clan to produce many experts, Seven Star Fiends, and even Asura-level experts.”

Linley understood this. The four Sovereigns had cultivated their descendants for countless years. Given that the Four Divine Beasts clansmen were naturally blessed with gifts to begin with, it made sense for them to be mighty.

If they weren’t mighty, how could they have dominated the many other planes?

After all, to dominate the other planes, the power of the ancestors was just one aspect. The many powerful experts which the Four Divine Beasts clan held was another aspect.

“They were powerful, but they couldn’t overcome the superior numbers of their enemies, and in addition, their enemies were also powerful.” Baruch sighed. “The worst part was, eight of the clans who held had the deepest grudges against and had the most hatred for the Four Divine Beasts clan ended up actually slaughtering a path into the Infernal Realm!”

“They attacked here in the Infernal Realm?” Linley was astonished.

“Right. Those clans actually moved their entire clans to the Infernal Realm in pursuit of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Baruch said.

Linley was completely stunned.

“Amongst them is the Barbary [Ba’ba’li] clan which attacked from the Divine Water Plane, the Dean [De’en] clan from the Divine Earth Plane, the Edric [Ai’de’li’ke] clan from the Higher Plane of the Life Realm, the Venna [Wen’na] clan of the Divine Wind Plane, the Ashcroft [A’she’ke’luo’fu’te] clan of the Netherworld, the Chanel [Sheng’nei’er] clan of the Divine Fire Plane, and also the Boleyn clan of the Celestial Realm!” Baruch said solemnly.

Linley was completely dazed.

The transportation fee for moving between high level planes was astronomical. To move an entire clan would require an astonishingly amount of wealth, but these families were able to accomplish it, which was a testament to their wealth.

In addition...

They were willing to move from their own planes to the Infernal Realm. One could imagine how great their hatred was!

“There were, in total, seven major clans. Aside from these seven clans, in the Infernal Realm, there was one clan already present who had great enmity against our Four Divine Beasts clan. This is the ‘Reinales’ clan.” Baruch said.

Linley sighed to himself.

They even had enemies on their own lands.

“Not a single one of these eight major clans are weaker than our Azure Dragon clan.” Baruch said solemnly.

Linley felt bitterness in his heart.

None of them were weaker than the Azure Dragon clan? Linley knew that in the Four Divine Beasts clan, the Azure Dragon clan was the leader. Even if theoretically all four of the Four Divine Beasts clans were equal in power, allied together, they still couldn't overcome the eight clans of the enemies!

“The eight clans joined forces. Doesn't that mean we shouldn't have been able to resist?” Linley was puzzled.

If none of them were weaker than the Azure Dragon clan, once the eight joined forces, how could the Four Divine Beasts clan possibly resist?

“Right. We couldn't resist.” Baruch said. “However, we had the help of the Lord Prefect of the Indigo Prefecture.”

“The Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture?” Linley was surprised. The Lord Prefect of a prefecture was an Asura!

“The Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture has four powerful emissaries under his command, each of whom is exceedingly powerful. In addition, the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture also controls the prefecture army.” Baruch said. “The Lord Prefect forbade the eight clans from attacking the Skyrise Mountains. If battles occurred outside of the Skyrise Mountains, however, he wouldn't interfere.”

Linley now understood. If the enemies had agreed, then the Four Divine Beasts clan wouldn't be completely destroyed, at least.

They had to just hide within the Skyrise Mountains.

But the Four Divine Beasts clan couldn't possibly stay forever within the mountain without leaving. As soon as they left, they would suffer attacks.

“The eight clans obeyed the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture?” Linley was puzzled.

Of these eight clans, seven came from other planes, and each of them was very powerful. These eight major clans would care about a single Lord Prefect? But of course, behind the Lord Prefect was a large number of prefecture soldiers.

“The eight clans obeyed.” Baruch laughed. “All these years, they truly have never attacked the Skyrise Mountains.”

Linley was secretly shocked at the influence of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture.

“The Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture was actually willing to assist our Four Divine Beasts clan.” Linley sighed to himself.

“I'm not clear as to the reason why, myself. There is probably a deep secret hidden within.” Baruch said. “Perhaps this was the reason why our Four Divine Beasts clan withdrew back to Indigo Prefecture to begin with.”

Linley nodded.

“But our clan can’t always be trapped within the mountains.” Baruch sighed. “Thus, battles still occur quite often. In addition, once they begin, they only end with one party’s death. Either you die or I die.”

Linley remembered clearly that scene he had encountered when he had first arrived at Indigo Prefecture, where the Boleyn clan had engaged in a wild slaughter. Only now did Linley understand that the Boleyn clan was one of those eight clans, and was from the Celestial Realm.

“Linley, you are powerful. Once you become a Highgod, you will definitely become a formidable warlord for our clan. Thus, I want to warn you in advance about this, so that you will continue to train hard.” Baruch said.

“Understood.” Linley nodded.

“I’m just afraid that something terrible will happen to you in those battles...haha, I’m thinking too much.” Baruch immediately shook his head and laughed. “You haven’t even undergone the Ancestral Baptism, and yet you are so powerful. Once you undergo the Ancestral Baptism, you will definitely become even mightier.”

“Ancestral Baptism?”

Linley was extremely curious regarding this. “Clan leader, what exactly is an Ancestral Baptism, and what does it do?”

Baruch laughed. “The Ancestral Baptism is actually a process which truly guides out the innate ability of our Azure Dragon clan. As members of the Azure Dragon clan, we all are at least capable of assuming the Azure Dragonform. But as a clan descended from a divine beast, we have to at least be capable of an ‘innate divine ability’ as well, right?”

“Azure Dragonform? Innate divine ability?” Linley was rather stunned.

The Four Divine Beasts clan was a clan of divine beasts. Naturally, they had their own ‘innate divine abilities’.

“However, although we belong to the Azure Dragon clan, only the ancestor could was a true Azure Dragon. We, his descendants, don’t have as pure a blood lineage as he had. Thus, there are differences in our Azure Dragonform, and we have varying levels of strength in our innate divine ability as well.” Baruch said.

“Varying levels of strength?” Linley frowned.

“Right. The more of the blood of the ancestor which flows in our veins, the more pure that blood is, then the more powerful the Azure Dragonform will be. The innate divine ability will also grow to be more powerful.” Baruch said. “But unfortunately, after so many generations, the blood lineage of the descendants has grown rather thin.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 9, Eighty Years

As they discussed this, Baruch actually laughed. “But the strange thing is, my bloodline is actually extremely pure. When undergoing the Ancestral Baptism, I actually badly startled those warriors on guard there, and was received by the elder.”

“Your bloodline is very pure?” Linley looked at Baruch.

Baruch was just six thousand years old, while the Four Divine Beasts clan had been in existence for countless years. It was indeed quite bizarre for Baruch’s bloodline to be so pure.

“Generally speaking, the children of our ancestor, in particular the second and third generation members of our Azure Dragon clan, will have extremely an pure lineage. But unexpectedly, my bloodlines are actually comparable with the second generation.” Baruch didn’t hide anything at all.

The second generation of the Azure Dragon clan was composed of the sons and daughters of the ‘Azure Dragon’ Sovereign.

The children of the ‘Azure Dragon’ Sovereign naturally had very pure bloodlines. The members of the third generation who had great innate talent could also be compared to the second generation.

But as for the later generations...

Perhaps occasionally, in one generation, a genius would appear with extremely pure Azure Dragon lineage. But this was a vanishingly rare occurrence. Baruch, however, was one such example.

“This is also precisely the case as to why that elder told me these things regarding our clan.” Baruch said.

So that was how it was.

Linley now understood. Up till now, he had been puzzled at how Baruch knew these things.

“Actually, the affairs of our ancestor as well those eight clans isn’t much of a secret. In the clan, everyone with pure bloodlines, high potential, or are at the Highgod level will all know about these things.” Baruch said solemnly. “After all, clan warfare occurs frequently.”

Linley nodded. “I could sense that when I saw those patrolling guards.”

The strictness and severity of the vigilance of the Four Divine Beasts clan was far greater than that of the patrols on Miluo Island.

“Linley, your natural talent is definitely better than even mine.” Baruch’s eyes were shining. “You haven’t even undergone the Ancestral Baptism, but you are already so powerful. After you undergo it, you’ll then gain insights into the Elemental Laws of Water.”

“Insights into the Elemental Laws of Water?” Linley said in astonishment.

He currently had only gained insights into the earth, the wind, and fire. He didn’t have any insights whatsoever into the other Elemental Laws.

Baruch said solemnly, "Right. Our Azure Dragon clan is the clan of a water-type divine beast. If the members of our clan aren't even able to understand the Elemental Laws of Water, then we would be jokes. Currently, you aren't able to gain insights into it, but that's only because your lineage hasn't been fully awakened. After you enter the 'Dragonize Pool' and undergo the Ancestral Baptism, you will naturally be transformed into an 'Azure Dragon', while at the same time, you will naturally and immediately reach the Demigod level in the Laws of Water. In addition, you will also gain our innate divine ability."

Linley was completely stunned.

In the past, when Linley had watched how divine beasts would naturally become Deities after reaching adulthood, he would secretly sigh at how naturally blessed they were.

But he hadn't expected that the same was true for himself.

"I can become an Azure Dragon, and not only gain an 'innate divine ability', I'll also become a Deity in water!" Linley couldn't help but feel joy in his heart. "Most likely, in the Infernal Realm, there are very few people who have five divine clones, including my original body."

Once he underwent the Ancestral Baptism, he would have the earth clone, fire clone, water clone, wind clone, and original body. Five bodies.

Since born, he had high elemental affinity for 'earth' and 'wind', and he was also able to somewhat use 'fire'. But now, he would also have 'water'.

"We are the Azure Dragon clan!" Baruch said proudly. "Training in the Elemental Laws of Water will be extremely fast. Look at me. Although my understanding and ability to gain insights is poor, in just a few thousand years, I've already gained insights into five of the profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of Water. I'm not too far away from the Highgod level."

Linley couldn't help but be astonished. For a person to gain insights and master five of the profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of Water in just a few thousand years was indeed very fast.

"The heavens have indeed been quite kind to the Azure Dragon clan." Linley said to himself.

"Clan leader, I haven't undergone the Ancestral Baptism yet. Then, how can I go undergo it?" Linley hurriedly asked. The Ancestral Baptism would allow himself to increase in power. Naturally, the sooner he experienced it, the better.

"Don't be impatient." Baruch laughed. "The Ancestral Baptism is carried out within the clan only once every century. Although the clan is very large, every hundred years, there will still be some newborn descendants. Thus, they'll be allowed to undergo the Ancestral Baptism."

"Oh." Linley hurriedly asked, "Then when will the next Ancestral Baptism be?"

"The last one was twenty years ago. Thus, if you want to go undergo the Ancestral Baptism, you'll need to wait eighty years." Baruch said.

"Eighty years." Linley wasn't in a rush.

Ever since he had stayed five hundred years in the Amethyst Mountains, Linley no longer cared too much about the passage of time. A single session of meditation...after closing his eyes, eighty years might pass before he would open them again.

"Linley, in the future, you will be very powerful. Thus, your responsibilities will also be great. Our Four Divine Beasts clan is currently battling against those eight great clans. You will definitely become a

powerful warlord for our clan. Thus...you need to work hard. Only in this way will you be able to survive in the dangerous battles of the future.” Baruch said solemnly.

And Linley nodded seriously as well.

In the eight great clans, seven were from other planes. They had moved their entire clans over, pursuing and attacking the Four Divine Beasts clan. One could imagine how deep their hatred was for the Four Divine Beasts clan. However, given the arrogance of the Four Divine Beasts clan, there was no way they could forever hide within the Skyrite Mountains.

The struggles and battles between them thus naturally happened all the time.

The warfare between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans...as soon as Linley got involved, he would begin to experience a true rain of blood and storm of slaughter.

“I need to train hard.” Linley said to himself.

Indigo Prefecture, Skyrite Mountains. It was as calm and peaceful as ever. Perhaps the army of the Four Divine Beasts clan would be sent out to battle and war against the eight great clans, but Linley’s group who lived deep within the Skyrite Mountains knew nothing of these things.

The peaceful days spent in training passed very quickly. Sixty years soon passed.

On this day.

In the Skyrite Mountains. The gorge where Linley’s group was currently living. The many members of the Azure Dragon clan living here were either training or gathering together.

“Let’s go to the Yulan branch and tease those little fellows. Want to come?” In one corner of the gorge, six youths were gathered together, and one of them, a blue-haired man, laughed as he spoke.

“I’m not going.”

“I’m not going either.”

The other five men all shook their heads, and one of them even said, “Second Brother, don’t go cause trouble at the Yulan branch.”

“What’s wrong with you? How come all of you are so cowardly now. It’s just the Yulan branch. Their strongest members are just Gods. What are you afraid of?” The blue-haired man was rather unhappy.

“Second Brother, in the past, it was fine to cause problems for the Yulan branch, but what you don’t realize is that in the centuries you’ve been in seclusion, there have been changes in the Yulan branch.”

“What sort of changes?” The blue-haired man snickered. “Can it be that in just a few centuries, they’ve produced a Highgod? A few centuries ago, their entire branch only had twelve Gods. Aside from that Baruch who trains a bit faster, the others are all very slow. Can it be that Baruch has become a Highgod?”

“It’s not Baruch. Sixty years ago, another member of our clan returned and said that he was of the Yulan branch. The tribesmen all took him to be a God, but he was able to just stand there without moving and send Asru flying.”

The blue-haired youth couldn’t help but be stunned. “Did you say Asru?”

“Not just Asru. When we heard this from Asru, we didn’t believe it. So, we went with Elder Brother to make some trouble for him, but...even Elder Brother was easily defeated by that Linley.”

“Elder Brother?” The blue-haired man was now truly stunned. “My Elder Brother was defeated as well?”

“Right. Thus, Elder Brother is now meditating in seclusion.” Another one of the five spoke out.

Only now did the blue-haired man realize that this was the reason he hadn’t seen his Elder Brother this time upon concluding his training. He had thought that his Elder Brother had gone travelling. So in reality, he was in seclusion.

“This person truly is powerful?” The blue-haired man asked, puzzled. “What is his name?”

“From what the Yulan branch’s people say, he is named Linley!” Someone immediately said.

“Right. His name is Linley. Those Yulan branch members are now very smug. They even say...that if we want to struggle against the Yulan branch, then we should come and see if we can beat Linley. Unfortunately, all of the Highgods in our gorge who tested him were defeated.”

“Thus, in the past sixty years, nobody has dared to cause trouble for the Yulan branch again.”

After hearing the explanation from his friends, the blue-haired man finally understood.

This gorge was a place where very weak branches lived. Many branches had just a few Highgods, and the entire gorge, all combined, only had twenty or thirty Highgods. But Linley was able to defeat several of them.

Naturally, the other branches in the gorge would acknowledge the new status of the Yulan branch and not go humiliate them.

After all, if instead of humiliating them, they were themselves humiliated, that would truly be a loss of face.

Suddenly...

A surge of endless ripples descended from the heavens. That unique energy ripple caused the blue-haired man and the other five to be startled.

“The descent of the natural Laws?” The six men were greatly shocked.

This was the sign of a person becoming a Deity on their own.

The six immediately began to chat amongst themselves.

“Who made a breakthrough?”

“The descent of the natural Laws was centered on the Yulan branch. It was someone from their branch.”

“It’s probably that Saint, finally breaking through to become a Demigod. No need for all this commotion.” The blue-haired man snickered.

.....

Currently, quite a few people were gathered outside Linley’s door, with only Delia and Bebe having run inside.

“What’s going on?” Baruch walked over and immediately asked.

Tarosse laughed. “Linley made a breakthrough.”

“He’s become a Highgod?” Baruch immediately asked through divine sense. Up till now, many of the other people in the Yulan branch viewed Linley as a Highgod, just one who was low-key and hid his aura.

“Not sure.” Tarosse shook his head. “He shouldn’t have. When Linley first arrived, he was still meditating on the fifth profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth.”

While they chatted amongst themselves, three figures emerged from within the room.

“He came out. Linley came out.” The Yulan branch’s clansmen were all very excited.

“Everyone, you can go back to your own places now. I just made a breakthrough in one of my divine clone’s, that’s all.” Linley laughed calmly. Seeing the group of clansmen present, especially the look of veneration with which they viewed him, Linley still felt quite happy.

After having arrived here, Linley naturally wouldn’t just watch as his clansmen were humiliated. Thus, on multiple occasions, he had shown his might, shocking the other branches.

These days, the Yulan branch no longer accepted being humiliated. These other clansmen naturally felt gratitude towards Linley.

“Everyone can disperse now. Don’t stay here.” Baruch laughed as well.

Only now did the group of clansmen, chatting and laughing amongst themselves, depart. While doing so, they said amongst themselves, “Linley is so formidable. What clone do you think made the breakthrough?”

“Most likely, a divine Destruction clone.”

“It might be his divine Wind clone.”

Those other clansmen weren’t clear about Linley’s details. They weren’t even sure as to what type of Laws Linley was currently training in.

“Linley, what breakthrough did you make?” Cesar went up to him, greeting and asking him.

“Divine fire clone.” Linley laughed at himself. “Only now have I finally reached the God level in my divine fire clone. I truly am slow in training in fire.”

Cesar, Tarosse, and the others were immediately speechless. He had been training for less than a thousand years, but had reached the God level in earth, wind, and fire...and he was complaining that he was slow?

“How is your training in the Laws of the Earth progressing?” Tarosse asked.

“Still training in the fifth profound mystery. I’ve reached a bottleneck. I wonder if I’ll be able to completely master the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’ before the Ancestral Baptism.” Linley said.

Only a decade or two was left before the next Ancestral Baptism.

Ten or so years, to Deities, was a very short period of time. Linley’s original body accompanied Delia, while his three divine clones were completely absorbed in their training. But even after the day of the Ancestral Baptism was about to arrive, the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’ remained stuck at the bottleneck.

On this day, nearly eighty years had passed since Linley had arrived at the Skyrite Mountains.

In front of Linley's residence. Baruch was walking over.

"Linley, tonight, the Ancestral Baptism is about to begin. I've already registered your name for it. Soon, you'll most likely be led away by others to participate in the Ancestral Baptism. Make your preparations."

"Understood." Linley's eyes couldn't help but be filled with a look of anticipation.

The Ancestral Baptism. What exactly was it like?

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 10, Dragonize Pool

The skies were dark. It was already sundown.

Tonight, the Ancestral Baptism was going to begin. Within the gorge in the Skyrise Mountains, Linley was patiently waiting. Just a short while later, Linley saw a warrior dressed in azure armor fly over from the air.

“Who is Linley!” The azure armored warrior shouted.

Linley felt a surge of joy. He immediately went up to greet the man.

“I am Linley.” Linley laughed. The azure armored warrior glanced at Linley. After a short, careful scrutinization, he couldn’t help but frown and bark, “Stop joking around. Everyone who goes to the Ancestral Baptism is less than a century old. You are a God. Can it be that you are less than a century old? Quick, go have Linley come out.”

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. It seemed as though he had been taken for an imposter.

“I am Linley. I had been living in other planes, and only returned to the Skyrise Mountains just eighty years ago.” Linley explained. “Thus, up till now, I have yet to participate in the Ancestral Baptism.”

“Oh?” The azure armored warrior was rather puzzled.

At this moment, watching from below, Baruch, Delia, Bebe, and the others also didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. The azure armored warrior actually didn’t believe Linley was who he said he was. Baruch himself immediately flew up towards that azure armored warrior. “It’s true. He is indeed Linley. He wasn’t born in our Skyrise Mountains, which is why to this very day, he has yet to undergo the Ancestral Baptism.”

The azure armored warrior glanced at Linley, then let out a cold snort. “I’ll believe you for now. But, kid, you better understand...if you’ve already undergone an Ancestral Baptism, undergoing a second baptism will be of no use to you. And, if you were to be found out to be an imposter, you will be in trouble. Enough. Let’s go.”

The azure armored warrior immediately flew high into the sky.

Linley turned his head to say his farewells to Delia and Bebe, then immediately followed.

They flew up into the Dragon Avenue, and followed it. Linley kept close behind the azure armored warrior as they advanced nonstop. After flying for quite some time by the side of this azure armored warrior, the two arrived at the top of a pitch-black mountain peak.

At the top of the mountain peak, there were multiple azure armored guards, a bald, black-robed man, as well as ten or so young men and women.

“Milord, Linley has been brought here.” The azure armored warrior flew over and immediately said respectfully.

The bald, black-robed man glanced sideways at Linley, nodded, then instructed the warrior, "Enough. You can leave now." The black-robed man looked at Linley. "Linley, wait here for a while. When everyone is present, we'll go in."

"Yes." Linley stood there with the other ten or so people.

"These people are all just Saints." Linley could immediately tell that these youngsters were very suspicious, and they looked at Linley in surprise. They were amazed to discover that they actually couldn't see Linley's power!

"This person isn't a Saint?" Those young men and women were all puzzled.

For someone who had been born less than a century ago, especially a descendant of the Azure Dragon clan, it wasn't very likely that they would be able to become a Deity on their own without having undergone the Ancestral Baptism.

Linley just waited there quietly, as one young man after another was led here by azure armored warriors.

"A total of twenty eight. All present." The bald, black-robed man nodded slightly, then said calmly, "Enough. Little fellows, all follow me. Remember, without my permission, you aren't allowed to run around wildly."

As he spoke, the bald, black-robed man led them all into a corridor within the mountain peak.

The outsides of the entrance to the corridor were all covered with draconic sculptures. The entire corridor led downwards, deep into the heart of the mountain. This corridor was nearly six meters wide and four meters tall. It was very rectangular, while at the same time the walls of the corridor had some ancient sculptures as well.

The floor was covered with a woven carpet.

Linley just quietly followed the bald, black-robed man.

"Hey, you, you're already a Deity?" A jade-haired girl walking alongside Linley couldn't resist her curiosity, and so she asked the question in a soft voice.

Linley turned to glance at her. He chuckled, but only nodded in response.

The jade-haired girl's eyes immediately lit up, and were filled with a look of adoration. "You are so amazing. You've never undergone the Ancestral Baptism, but you were able to become a Deity in under a century." Even the other youths who were taking part in the Ancestral Baptism turned to look at Linley with either veneration, or surprise, or jealousy.

Less than a century?

He had passed the century mark long ago. However...in the Yulan continent, when he had become a Deity on his own, it was true that at that time, he had been training for less than a century.

"Pipe down." The bald, black-robed man shouted icily.

Immediately, those twelve Saints were so scared, they didn't dare say another word. Linley's expression didn't change. "This bald fellow has quite the temper." Linley continued to walk and follow him. Moments later, they arrived at the end of the corridor, which had a wide hall past it with quite a few black-robed figures within.

"All here?" One of the black-robed men went to welcome them.

“A total of twenty eight. All present.” The bald, black-robed man said. “You watch them for a while. I’ll go invite the two elders to activate the Dragonize Pool.”

“Right. Do you know where the two elders are, right now?” The black-robed man said.

The bald, black-robed man said, puzzled, “Could it be that they haven’t arrived yet?”

“They arrived, they arrived. But the two elders just went into a private room. They even said that without their permission, nobody is permitted to enter.” The black-robed man was puzzled. “They are in the private room in the eastern palace hall.”

“I’ll go take a look.” The bald, black-robed man immediately walked over.

Deep within the mountain, in a private room in the eastern palace hall.

Two figures were currently standing, shoulder to shoulder. One of them had a hawk-hooked nose, a balding head, two drooping sideburns, and a pair of eyes that were as grim and callous as a viper’s. The other was very handsome, with long hair that flowed down his back.

The two were both dressed in azure armor that was embroidered with gold patterns, as well as a cloak that was covered with strange, peculiar magic runes which flowed with all sorts of faint light.

They were currently focusing their attention on watching a scryer recording that currently being broadcast, floating in the air within the private room.

“Formidable.” The bald man couldn’t help but sigh in praise.

“Even you and I probably wouldn’t be able to so easily block that blade blow.” The handsome man sighed in praise as well.

The scryer recording currently being played, amazingly, was the scene of Linley’s battle in the skies above Miluo Island. The scene which had just caused the two to sigh in amazement was that of the red-robed elder of the Bagshaw clan using a single blade chop to break apart Linley’s ‘cube’.

That battle had been watched by many outsiders who were present at Miluo Island. Those of them who trained in the Elemental Laws of Water naturally would record it down.

Because the main figure in this battle, ‘Linley’, was considered by many experts to be of the ‘Four Divine Beasts clan’, these scryer recordings naturally made their way to the Four Divine Beasts clan. Only, the speed at which this happened was rather slow.

Linley had been in the Four Divine Beasts clan for so many years now, but the scryer recording had just now made its way here.

“Look. That red-robed elder is about to fight with our clansman.” The handsome man said hurriedly.

In the scryer recording, that red-robed elder, after hearing the order from the clan leader of the Bagshaw clan, ‘Bakwill’, began to wield his blade and charge towards Linley.

Seeing the saber blow strike down, the two elders both held their breaths.

But then, they saw from the scryer recording that Linley was able to use just his right leg to kick against that saber, smashing that Seven Star Fiend directly into the ground. Moments later, the scryer recording came to an end.

“Formidable!” The handsome man sighed in praise.

A stunned look was in the eyes of the bald man as well. “Just by relying on his body, he was able to resist a full force material attack from a Seven Star Fiend. For his body to be so incredibly strong...even in our clan, there are few who are at this level.”

“You and I are not, at least.” The handsome man agreed.

Although the Azure Dragon clan’s members were indeed strong in Dragonform, to be as strong as this...very few in the Azure Dragon clan could accomplish it. For one’s Dragonform to be at this level of power wasn’t just a matter of lineage; it also required other factors.

“It isn’t just that his body is tough. Did you see that globe of earthen yellow light surrounding his body? Everyone trapped within it will have their movements be affected. Even that red-robed elder of Miluo Island was affected as well.” The bald man said solemnly.

“Right. That’s a Gravitational Space. An extremely formidable Gravitational Space.” The handsome youth said, puzzled, “Someone in our clan is actually specialized in the Laws of the Earth? And at such a level? Inconceivable!”

After having seen that snyder recording, they were certain that this person was of their clan.

In the entire Infernal Realm, only the Azure Dragon clan could have such powerful bodies after assuming Dragonform!

“This person’s power is great.” The bald man sighed. “He was able to defeat a Seven Star Fiend without even using his innate divine ability. If he had used his innate divine ability, he would have easily won.”

“Right.” The handsome man nodded. “His body is so powerful, which means that his lineage must be very pure. If his lineage is very pure, then his innate divine ability must be formidable as well.” The handsome youth knew full well how powerful his clan’s innate divine ability was.”

“But, I’ve never seen this person before.” The bald man looked at the other man. “Have you?”

The handsome man frowned. “This transformation...I haven’t seen it either.”

“It might be an expert who is in seclusion outside the clan.” The handsome man said.

“Hmph. The clan is in a state of crisis, but this person still doesn’t return.” The bald man was clearly very unhappy. “He might be powerful, but if he doesn’t return, what good is he?”

“Knock!” “Knock!”

The sound of the door being knocked.

“Enter.” The bald man said calmly.

The bald, black-robed man pushed open the door to the private room, then said respectfully, “Elders, the twenty eight participants of the Ancestral Baptism are here.”

“Oh. Let’s go. Let’s activate the Dragonize Pool.” The handsome man said, and then he headed out alongside the bald man.

The two were members of the elders of the Azure Dragon clan.

Linley's group of twenty eight followed behind the two elders and the four black-robed men, walking through a narrow corridor. Up in front, the two elders chatted and laughed with each other. "Garvey [Jia'wei], it's quite a rare occasion for us to have a God participate in the Ancestral Baptism."

"It is quite interesting." The handsome man nodded.

"He became a God without undergoing the Ancestral Baptism. Not bad." The handsome man turned to glance at Linley, but unfortunately...during that great battle above Miluo Island, Linley had been in Dragonform the entire time.

Currently, Linley was in human form, so the two elders naturally couldn't recognize him as being the main character of the scribe recording they had just seen, that so called 'reclusive expert' who was living outside the clan.

At the end of the walkway was a very wide palace hall.

In the center of the palace hall, there was a large round pool that was two hundred meter in diameter. The waters of the pool emitted a very peculiar odor, and next to the pool, there was a black-robed figure that was tossing in a large amount of herbs into it.

"Bubble, bubble..." The waters of the pool continuously frothed.

"This is the Dragonize Pool." The bald man said in a clear voice. "Wait a while. Go in only after I tell you to."

As he spoke, the bald man, with a flip of his hand, retrieved a fist-sized gemstone. This fist-sized gemstone sparkled with a dazzling azure light, and the bald man tossed it directly into the Dragonize Pool.

"Plonk!" The gemstone fell into the waters of the pool.

The strange thing was...

The Dragonize Pool immediately glowed with a dazzling azure light that was quite piercing to the eye. And then, the waters of the entire Dragonize Pool began to wildly bubble, with blasts of water constantly appearing and a large amount of azure energy forming waves that circulated on the surface, as though tiny azure dragons were swirling about.

"Enough. You can all go in now." The bald man said casually.

"You keep an eye on them for me." The bald man turned to look at the bald, black-robed man. "After the Ancestral Baptism is complete, retrieve the Dragonize Jewel and give it to us."

"Yes, Elder." The bald, black-robed man bowed as he replied.

"Let's go." The bald man and the handsome man laughed, then departed. The Ancestral Baptism would take a fairly long period of time. The two elders wouldn't just wait there like fools.

The bald, black-robed man immediately stared coldly at the group of twenty eight. "All of you, go in."

"Dragonize Pool?" Linley stared at the azure energy swirling about in front of him, at that Dragonize Pool that was emitting that dazzling azure light. He immediately dove directly into the Dragonize Pool, moving so fast he was like a ray of light. As for the other twenty seven, they too charged forward en masse and entered the Dragonize Pool.

The twenty eight all landed within the Dragonize Pool.

“Roaaaaaaaaaaaaaar!” The entire Dragonize Pool emitted a strange, draconic roar, a roar which shook the soul. At the same time, the dazzling azure light which the Dragonize Pool had been shooting out in every direction began to dim, and the large amounts of azure energy swirling on the surface of the pool, with a whoosh, flooded towards those twenty eight people.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 11,

Innate Divine Ability

Countless streams of azure energy circled about like serpents slithering in the Dragonize Pool. These azure energy currents flooded towards those twenty eight people, surrounding them like azure silkworm cocoons which continuously spun themselves around them.

“What an unusual feeling.”

As soon as he had entered the Dragonize Pool, Linley had sensed a large amount of energy surrounding him. It was as though he had been returned to his mother’s womb. The strange energy brought warmth to every part of his body and seeped deep into it.

His body felt both numb and comfortable.

“So this is the Ancestral Baptism. Quite comfortable, actually.” Linley closed his eyes, luxuriating in the feeling of that unique energy entering his body.

The energy continuously seeped in through his skin. His flesh, his nerves, his blood vessels, his blood...they were all infused with it. Even his bones were infused with it...and even his eyes and eyelids were going numb. From inside to outside, not a single part of his body was left unchanged.

In terms of spirit or body, Linley was currently in a very relaxed state.

The palace hall where the Dragonize Pool was located was extremely large. It was three or four hundred meters wide, and nearly a hundred meters tall. The ceiling of the palace hall, in particular, had an image of a bellowing dragon carved into it.

“Bubble, bubble...” The Dragonize Pool continuously frothed.

At the side of the Dragonize Pool, quite a few black-robed men were resting while watching these twenty eight junior descendants metamorphosize.

“The Ancestral Baptism will take at least one or two days. Some with purer bloodlines will have their Ancestral Baptism last for six or seven days.” The bald, black-robed man shook his head. “The two Elders went to rest, but we still have to wait here.”

A silver-haired youth by the side of the bald, black-robed man laughed. “When one day you become a member of the Council of Elders, you can be like that as well.”

“Me? Become an Elder? I’ll wait to have the power of a Seven Star Fiend first.” The bald, black-robed man said resignedly.

“Hey. These juniors are beginning to slow down in their rate of absorbing the energy of the Dragonize Jewel.” The silver-haired youth suddenly said.

The bald, black-robed man turned to look. Indeed.

Currently, in the Dragonize Pool, twenty five of the twenty eight azure cocoons had ceased absorbing the azure energy, with only three left which continued to devour the azure energy.

“During this Ancestral Baptism, there’s actually three who have high potential.” The bald, black-robed man sighed in praise. “The longer they can absorb the power of the ‘Dragonize Gem’, the purer the ancestor’s blood is in their veins, and the greater amount as well.”

“Right.” The silver-haired youth nodded. “However, juniors these days all have very shallow amounts of the lineage. Now that they are done absorbing the energy of the Dragonize Gem, they’ll have completed their Ancestral Baptism shortly.”

“I heard that the more powerful second and third generation members of our clan, when undergoing their Ancestral Baptism, took one or two full days just to absorb the energy of the Dragonize Gem.” The bald, black-robed man said mysteriously.

“Are you serious?” The silver-haired youth didn’t dare believe it. “Ordinary clansmen only need a few moments to complete the absorption part. Is the lineage of the second and third generation clansmen that much superior to ordinary clansmen?”

“Why would I lie to you? Not long ago, that Baruch fellow. Do you know of him?” The bald, black-robed man said.

“I do.” The silver-haired youth sighed in praise. “Supposedly, he spent a full night just absorbing the power of the Dragonize Gem. The purity of his lineage is truly quite rare.”

“Just think about it. If even Baruch’s lineage could be so pure, how pure is the lineage of the second and third generations?” The bald, black-robed man laughed.

“That Dragonize Gem had been completely charged, but he immediately absorbed almost a third of it.” The bald, black-robed man sighed with feeling. “I saw this happen myself.”

“A third? That much?” The silver-haired youth said in shock.

A single ‘Dragonize Gem’ would generally be swapped out for a fully charged Dragonize Gem after using up half of its energy. However, generally speaking, half of the energy of a Dragonize Gem would be enough to provide Ancestral Baptisms for thousands of years for the clan.

Given there was an Ancestral Baptism every hundred years, that meant it could be used for tens of times, consecutively.

But Baruch had caused the Dragonize Gem to have a third of its energy used up in a single Ancestral Baptism. This was indeed shocking.

“It seems as though today’s Dragonize Gem is fully charged.” The bald, black-robed man said.

The Dragonize Gem was a fairly precious item for the Azure Dragon clan. To others, however, it was worthless. After all, the energy of the Dragonize Gem would only take effect on someone who had the ‘Azure Dragon lineage’. The Azure Dragon clan, in turn, had to spend an enormous amount of money to create these Dragonize Gems.

“Look, just one left. The other twenty seven have stopped absorbing the energy of the Dragonize Gem.” The silver-haired youth said.

The bald, black-robed man turned to look, only to see that in the Dragonize Pool, just a single, large azure energy cocoon remained. A large amount of azure energy continuously, ceaselessly flooded towards that azure cocoon, which seemed to be like a bottomless pit, capable of absorbing as much energy as came to it.

“Whoah-oh! This one should be that God.” The bald, black-robed man, glancing at the other twenty seven, knew that the remaining one was Linley.

“God?” The silver-haired youth laughed. “I hear that he just came back not long ago from the outside world. He was able to reach the God level without undergoing the Ancestral Baptism; he’s quite talented. No wonder he’s able to absorb so much of the energy of the Dragonize Gem.”

“Tell me, how much do you think he will absorb?” The bald, black-robed man laughed.

“Hard to say. Perhaps he might be able to absorb a tenth of the energy of the Dragonize Gem.” The youth said.

“A tenth? That’s not very likely.” The bald, black-robed man shook his head.

As they spoke, the two continued to pay attention to the final, remaining azure cocoon within the Dragonize Pool. As for the other twenty seven, they were in a state of slumber.

Time flowed on...

“Half the night has passed. He’s still absorbing?” All of the black-robed men around the Dragonize Pool were discussing this amongst themselves now.

“Crackle...”

That azure energy continued to endlessly flood towards Linley’s azure cocoon, which didn’t reject any of it, instead constantly absorbing all the azure energy. The strange energy of the Dragonize Gem continuously flooded every single part of Linley’s body.

But it seemed as though Linley’s bones and flesh were able to absorb as much energy as was sent to them.

“My entire body is shaking.” Linley felt extremely comfortable. He could sense that unique energy seeping deep into every part of his body, merging with the latent, potential energy throughout his body. The energy of the ‘Dragonize Gem’ was completely compatible with Linley’s bloodline energy.

However...

It was as though the bloodline energy in Linley’s body hadn’t been completely discovered yet. Thus, a large amount of the energy of the ‘Dragonize Gem’ continued to flood in, constantly drawing out the energy hidden deep in the blood which flowed throughout Linley’s body.

“It’s been an entire night.” The black-robed men surrounding the Dragonize Pool were awestruck.

“Last time, I heard that Baruch spent an entire night absorbing. But this person actually...right, what’s his name?” The silver-haired man asked.

“Linley. He’s Linley.” The bald, black-robed man had been in charge of assembling Linley’s group, and so he was very familiar with Linley’s information. “Oh, that Linley is just like Baruch. He also comes from the Yulan branch.”

“The same branch?” The silver-haired youth was astonished.

“I wonder how much energy this Linley will be able to absorb.” The bald, black-robed man stared at the Dragonize Pool.

The azure energy continued to flood out, not stopping at all.

Only a long time later...

The speed of the azure energy flow slowed down, then came to a halt. That azure cocoon merged into Linley's body as well. Within the Dragonize Pool, Linley completely stopped moving, falling into a slumber, just as the other twenty seven had.

"Half a day, and a full night."

The bald, black-robed man and the silver-haired youth looked at each other, their eyes filled with amazement and envy.

The longer one could absorb, the more pure one's lineage was, and the more talented one would be in water. In addition, one's 'innate divine ability' would also be more powerful!

Half a day and one night!

Only the legendary members of the second and third generation could compare to this.

"Ah!" Linley seemed to be asleep, but his consciousness was still quite clear.

Linley could sense that his skin, his flesh, his bones, his organs...his entire body seemed to be trembling with excitement as countless microscopic threads of energy danced about.

Throughout his body, every single cell was vibrating minutely.

The energy of the Dragonize Pool and the energy of his lineage was fusing together.

"It feel as though every part of my body is coming alive." Linley felt that this was inconceivable. In addition, the energy of the Dragonize Gem, along with the energy of his lineage, when coming together, were silently transforming Linley's body.

From his skin to his flesh to deep within his cells, a transformation was occurring.

An intrinsic metamorphosis.

As this silent transformation occurred, Linley allowed his body to change unimpeded, just using his consciousness to sense it.

Not long after Linley stopped absorbing the energy of the Dragonize Gem, the other people throughout the Dragonize Pool began to change dramatically.

"Hoooooowl!" First was a youth in the Dragonize Pool who suddenly opened his eyes, then let out a wild howl. Draconic scales suddenly emerged from his body, and his draconic tail began to thrash about in the pool as well.

Waves were sent splashing everywhere.

"Aaaaaaaaah!" This Dragonformed youth let out an agonized howl. Moments later, he slowly calmed down, regaining his calm.

At the same time...

"Rumble..." A rippling surge of energy came as the natural Law's descended.

A black-colored stone that glowed with an azure-greenish aura appeared, hovering above his head. It was a water-type divine spark!

“This kid is going to become a Demigod.” The silver-haired youth chuckled. All those who entered the Ancestral Baptism would naturally become Deities of water, and would also gain their innate divine ability.

“Hmph. The first one to transform is the one who absorbed the least amount of energy from the Dragonize Gem, and has the least potential.” The bald, black-robed man couldn’t help but snicker disdainfully.

“You...geeze. This junior just completed his Ancestral Baptism. Say something nice instead, can’t you?” The silver-haired man laughed calmly. He, too, knew that although the other had said some unpleasant words, these words were true. The lesser the lineage, the lesser the elemental affinity to water, and the weaker the innate divine ability.

As time flowed on, one person after another in the Dragonize Pool became Deities. The vast majority of them completed the process in just two days. The second and third to last required three days before becoming a Deity. After the two of them became Deities...in the entire Dragonize Pool, only Linley remained, still ‘slumbering’.

The twenty seven had gathered at the sides of the Dragonize Pool and were watching Linley within it.

“Wait slowly. From the looks of it, this Linley will need at least quite a few days before he will complete his transformation.” The silver-haired youth said.

“I expect he’ll take more time than Baruch did.” The bald, black-robed man said.

Time flowed on. In the blink of an eye, eleven days had passed since Linley had entered the Dragonize Pool. Very, very few members of the Azure Dragon clan would take eleven days for the transformation. Linley remained the only person in the Dragonize Pool.

“Aaaaaaah!” Linley suddenly let out an agonized howl.

Immediately, the group of black-robed men surrounding the Dragonize Pool, as well as those twenty seven others, felt their hearts tremble. They immediately looked over. At this moment, draconic scales completely covered Linley’s entire body, and savage spikes had sprouted out as well.

A terrifying aura drifted out.

“So painful!” Linley gritted his teeth. He felt as though every single cell in his body was exploding with terrifying power, and countless surges of energy were constantly merging inside his body. This exploding energy caused Linley to be unable to refrain from transforming.

The latent energy inherent in his mighty body continuously flowed out and merged like countless rivers that were flowing upwards.

Up, up, up!

Up into his mind!

At this moment, that soul-protecting Sovereign artifact was completely ineffective. This soul-protecting Sovereign artifact would defend against enemy attacks, but wouldn’t defend against Linley’s own energy.

This massive flood of energy poured directly into Linley’s sea of consciousness, completely surrounding the souls of Linley’s four clones.

In the sea of consciousness, that bizarre azure light began to glow like a halo. On multiple occasions, even as far back as when Linley was a Saint, this azure halo had saved him. But this time, the glowing azure halo was constantly growing more and more powerful!

The glowing azure halo grew more and more powerful, until it seemed to have transformed into the sun, illuminating the entire sea of consciousness.

The people by the side of the Dragonize Pool stared with wide eyes at this scene.

Around Linley's body, the phantom of an enormous Azure Dragon appeared, filling nearly the entire palace hall as it coiled around him. This Azure Dragon phantom hovered directly around Linley, and its illusory eyes actually swept the group of people by the side of the Dragonize Pool with its gaze.

"The Azure Dragon Phantom! It's actually the Azure Dragon Phantom! And what an incredibly clear Azure Dragon Phantom."

The black-robed men stared, slack-jawed.

As for Linley, he was currently opening his mouth, and as he did so, that Azure Dragon Phantom also opened its mouth, emitting a terrifying draconic cry....and as it did, a blurry azure energy halo suddenly spread out in every direction, filling the entire palace hall.

Every God and Demigod present suddenly froze, as though having lost all consciousness.

Even those black-robed Highgods could feel their souls be trapped in a very peculiar state.

The bald, black-robed man instantly regained his clarity of mind, then said in astonishment, "Innate divine ability, 'Dragon Roar', at such a terrifying level of power...and he is only a God. If he were a Highgod..."

"Rumble..."

The natural Laws suddenly descended.

Linley had become a Deity in water as well!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 12, The Might of the Dragon Roar

These black-robed figures had long since grown accustomed to the sight of people becoming Deities at the Dragonize Pool. Naturally, it wouldn't surprise them. However, they currently were still astonished by the enormous Azure Dragon Phantom which had appeared behind Linley.

“Azure Dragon Phantom. A God is capable of manifesting the ‘Azure Dragon Phantom’.” These black-robed men were utterly dazed.

Much like the divine beasts ‘Godeater Rat’ and ‘Suanni Lion’, the divine beast ‘Azure Dragon’, when using its innate divine ability, would also have an illusion of its true form appear behind it. If they were true divine beasts, then when using this innate divine ability as a Demigod, the illusory phantom would still appear.

But the Azure Dragon clan was different.

This was because in the entire Azure Dragon clan, only the ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’, was a true divine beast, a true ‘Azure Dragon’. As for his descendants, such as the clansmen of the second or third generation, all the way down to Linley...they only had the ‘bloodline’ of the Azure Dragon, but they weren't the true divine beast ‘Azure Dragon’.

The power of their innate divine ability was far inferior to that of their ancestor.

But although it was inferior to their ancestor's, there were still varying levels of strength with regards to this innate divine ability amongst the descendants of the Azure Dragon clan.

This was because the innate divine ability was linked to one's spiritual energy. Thus, generally speaking, clansmen who had extremely powerful innate divine abilities would only just barely manifest the ‘Azure Dragon Phantom’ upon reaching the Highgod level, when their souls became more powerful.

As for those with weaker innate divine abilities, even after becoming Highgods, they still wouldn't be able to form an ‘Azure Dragon Phantom’.

Only Gods with exceedingly powerful innate divine abilities were capable of forming an ‘Azure Dragon Phantom’.

For example, the second generation members of the Azure Dragon clan, as Gods, were able to manifest the Azure Dragon Phantom. As for the third generation, only part of them were able to manifest the Azure Dragon Phantom as Gods.

“A God who is capable of manifesting the Azure Dragon Phantom.” The black-robed men looked at each other, their gazes filled with shock.

“Rumble...”

To the side of Linley's original body, another Linley had appeared, hovering in the air, dressed in an azure-green robe and with a head full of azure-green hair, who emanated an aura of water. This was Linley's divine water clone, and it immediately entered Linley's original body.

The Azure Dragon Phantom had disappeared long ago.

“So this is what the Ancestral Baptism is all about.” Linley, his eyes closed, was sensing his sea of consciousness and his soul.

Deep within his mind, seated above that soul sea was his divine earth, fire, wind, and water clones. In the center of those four clones was that black stone, and above the black stone was the soul of Linley’s original body.

At the same time...

The entire soul sea was flooded with a thick, azure light.

In the Yulan continent, when Linley had only been a Saint, this azure light had saved Linley on multiple occasions. But afterwards, when Linley’s power had grown, the strength of this azure light had become far inferior to the soul attacks of others and unable to withstand them.

However, after this Ancestral Baptism, the power of this azure halo had increased ten-thousand-fold.

“So the innate divine ability is as marvelous as this.” Linley was incomparably surprised. “It isn’t just pure divine power, nor is it pure spiritual energy. When the spiritual energy and this azure aura combines, only then can this ‘innate divine ability’ be executed.”

Only now did Linley understand the reason why innate divine abilities could only be used by divine beasts, and why others couldn’t learn how to use them.

For example, Bebe’s ‘Godeater’.

For example, Dylin’s ‘Heaven Devourer’.

They were all divine beasts, causing their souls to have unique properties. The unique property of the Azure Dragon clan was this ‘azure halo’. Linley was unable to understand what source of energy this azure halo was, exactly.

It wasn’t divine power, nor was it spiritual energy.

After undergoing the Ancestral Baptism, Linley naturally gained insight into this innate divine ability, and naturally gained insight into one of the profound mysteries of the Laws of Water.

“This innate divine ability, ‘Dragon Roar’, has some similarities to my ‘Blackstone Prison’. They both have an impact on the soul, rather than being killing techniques.” Linley, after acquiring the ‘black stone’ at the Amethyst Mountains, was capable of using the black stone to exert a power that impacted the soul, causing enemies to enter a dazed state.

This ‘Dragon Roar’ also affected the soul.

“My innate divine ability, ‘Dragon Roar’, isn’t as strong as the ‘black stone’ with regards to affecting the enemy.” Linley had discovered the second difference now. Aside from the impact on an enemy’s soul, his innate divine ability, ‘Dragon Roar’, had another, unique impact.

“Impacting speed?” Linley shook his head. “Wrong. It impacts...time. Right. It’s time!”

The innate divine ability of the Azure Dragon clan, the ‘Dragon Roar’, didn’t just impact the soul; it also contained the ability to impact ‘time’. Although the strength of the effect on souls wasn’t too great, the power it had to influence time was utterly monstrous.

Neither the Seven Elemental Laws nor the Four Higher Edicts had an impact on time.

Time was something which was utterly inviolable.

And yet...

The innate divine ability of the divine beast, 'Azure Dragon', had an impact on time. Most likely, only this sort of innate, intrinsic divine ability could have an impact on time.

Bebe's 'Godeater' allowed the direct devouring of divine sparks.

The Azure Dragon's 'Dragon Roar' influenced time.

Neither could be trained. Unfortunately, Linley wasn't a true Azure Dragon, and so the true power of the 'Dragon Roar' couldn't be fully unleashed.

"When I use the 'Dragon Roar', the impact on time is very minute, virtually negligible." Linley thought of the ancestor. "However, if it were the ancestor, a true 'Azure Dragon' who used this divine ability, the effect would definitely be terrifying."

Although his blood was very pure, it was still far from being comparable to his ancestor.

"Currently, the power of my soul isn't very great, so when I use this innate divine ability, the impact on others is very limited. Once I reach the Highgod stage and absorb a large amount of amethysts, my soul will strengthen by tens of times over, and the impact on time this innate divine ability has will definitely become more noticeable."

Linley knew very well how terrifying the power to influence time was.

"However, this Ancestral Baptism has already had a tremendous effect on my power." Linley's heart was filled with joy.

The greatest benefit Linley had reaped from this increase in power was that azure halo. The azure halo, combined with his spiritual energy, could not only execute his innate divine ability, it could also...be used for soul defense!

For example, even at the Saint-level, the azure halo had blocked soul attacks.

But now, after the Ancestral Baptism, the power of that azure halo had been multiplied ten thousand times over. Once it fused with his spiritual energy, the power of Linley's soul defense was now extremely shocking.

"Given my current soul defense with the damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact assisting it, most likely only Seven Star Fiends who specialize in soul attacks are able to pose a threat to me. But whether or not they can kill me is another story."

Linley was completely confident.

Within the Dragonize Pool, Linley opened his eyes. Those black-robed men as well as the twenty seven others were all staring at him in amazement. Linley looked around the Dragonize Pool, realizing that he was the only one left within it.

"I didn't realize I was so slow." Linley laughed calmly, then flew out.

Only now did the bald, black-robed man wave his hand, and that Dragonize Jewel immediately levitated out of the Dragonize Pool. Currently, only half of the Dragonize Jewel was azure in color, with the other half being translucent.

“Half of the energy was used up.” The bald, black-robed man glanced in surprise at Linley.

“Make the arrangements to have these people be sent back.” The bald, black-robed man said to the silver-haired man.

“Fine.” The silver-haired man nodded.

Linley was quite delighted. Smiling, he followed after the silver-haired man, preparing to leave alongside him.

“Linley, hold it.” The bald, black-robed man suddenly said.

“Huh?” Linley turned to look at him, puzzled.

The bald, black-robed man forced out a smile. “During the Ancestral Baptism, all by yourself, you absorbed half the energy of a Dragonize Jewel over the course of one night and half a day. As a God, when utilizing our innate divine ability, you were able to form an Azure Dragon Phantom. You are indeed a genius of our clan...make a trip with me. Later, the Elders will definitely want to meet you.”

“Oh.” Linley laughed as well.

Baruch had told him as well that after his Ancestral Baptism, because his bloodline was almost as pure as those of the third generation clansmen, he had been received by an Elder, and thus learned many things regarding the clan.”

The twenty seven were immediately led away, while Linley followed the bald, black-robed man forward, passing through a walkway into a palace hall, then through yet another corridor before arriving at the eastern palace hall.

Within a private room that was deep within the eastern palace hall.

“Wait here for me.” The bald, black-robed man said.

Linley nodded.

The bald, black-robed man immediately walked out.

Linley had a hint of a smile on his lips. The Ancestral Baptism definitely had been a great boon to him. His soul defense had received an unexpected, delightful increase in power, and as for the ‘Dragon Roar’, in the future, when his soul grew more powerful, he would be able to truly unleash its might as well.

“I hope that the Elder won’t chat with me about all the various issues pertaining to the clan.” Linley said to himself. “It will be quite boring to listen to it a second time.”

In the hidden room, the bald man and the handsome youth were currently seated in the meditative position, awaiting the bald, black-robed man. Only when he entered did they open their eyes.

“You are so slow.” The bald man said coldly. “Give me the Dragonize Jewel.”

“Yes, Elder.” The bald, black-robed man offered the Dragonize Jewel.

Upon seeing it, the bald man and the handsome youth were both shocked.

“Only half remaining?” The handsome youth immediately said.

“Right. This Ancestral Baptism had a genius named Linley. He took half a day and a night just to absorb the energy from the Dragonize Jewel, and only now did he complete the Ancestral Baptism.” The bald, black-robed man said hurriedly.

The handsome youth and the bald man exchanged shocked glances.

“Emanuel [Yi’mān’niú’er], yet another person with potential has appeared in our clan.” The handsome youth sighed in praise.

“Quick, have him come over.” The bald man shouted hurriedly.

“Yes.” The bald, black-robed man immediately left.

Soon, Linley, dressed in a sky-blue robe and with his long brown hair casually flowing down his shoulders, walked in with a smile. Upon seeing these two people, Linley immediately bowed respectfully. “Linley greets the Elders.”

“So it is you.” The two had some recollection of Linley. It would be strange if they couldn’t remember a God-level Deity participating in the Ancestral Baptism.

The handsome youth laughed, “Linley, your bloodline is very pure, completely comparable with our third generation clansmen. You absolutely cannot squander such excellent innate gifts. The clan needs you.” As he spoke, he flipped his hand and produced a fairly thin book.

“The fall of our clan ten thousand years ago as well as our current crisis. Once you read this book, you will understand it all.” The handsome youth, with a toss, made the book fly straight towards Linley.

Linley let out a secret sigh of relief. So he was just given a book. He had been worried he would have to listen to the story once again.

“It makes sense...” Linley said to himself. “If this has to be told to every single person with high potential or every single person who becomes a Highgod, wouldn’t the Elders grow tired of it?” Linley took the book, pretending to flip through it.

“You can go back and read it later.” The handsome youth laughed. “Remember, after reading it, destroy it. Don’t allow those ordinary Demigods and Gods to learn of it. For now, it’s best to let them worry less.”

“Yes, Elder.” Linley immediately responded.

“Linley.” That bald man, ‘Emanuel’, also laughed. “Innate talent is one thing, but working hard and training is very important as well. Enough, you can go back and train. Remember...you are not permitted to use a divine spark. You have to rely on yourself to become a Highgod.”

If a genius like him was to use a divine spark, that would be an utter waste.

“Yes.” Linley immediately bowed, then turned and began to walk towards the outside.

“Emanuel, it’s quite rare for us to be able to encounter such a genius.” The handsome youth, ‘Garvey’, sighed in praise.

“Yes, it is quite rare. Let’s go.” The bald man, ‘Emanuel’, laughed as well, and then he rose to his feet. But as his gaze unconsciously swept across Linley, who had already reached the doorway, Emanuel’s gaze suddenly turned sharp!

A look of astonishment appeared on his face as well!

He stared unblinkingly at Linley's right hand. As Linley was walking away, the movements of his hand occasional revealed a glimpse of a black ring...the Coiling Dragon ring.

“That's...the ring of the ancestor. A soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!”

The balding man's face instantly turned purple, and his entire body was shaking, his mind lost in a fog. “A soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. That's a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!!!”

“Emanuel, what is it?” Garvey was rather puzzled.

By now, Linley had already pushed the door open and was walking out.

Only now did the bald man come to his senses, and he immediately shouted, “Linley, halt!!!”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 13, Greed!

Linley was currently walking outside the door. His power had risen after the Ancestral Baptism, so naturally, he was quite happy.

“He’s calling for me?” Linley, hearing the shout, couldn’t help but be puzzled.

However, Linley still turned to look behind him, only to see the bald Elder’s face was completely red, and even his eyes had turned scarlet. The man now looked like a rapacious wolf. Linley couldn’t help but grow cautious, while at the same time, he opened his mouth and spoke, “Elder, please let me know what you need?”

“Emanuel, what’s going on?” The handsome youth said.

What’s going on?

Only now did Emanuel awaken from his excitement and regain his clarity. His face returned to normal, and he looked at Linley in front of him. In his heart, he knew: “The appearance of the Azure Dragon ring of the ancestor cannot be made public. I can’t let this Garvey learn of this.”

Emanuel was a member of the Assembly of Elders of the Azure Dragon clan.

He himself was a fourth generation member of the clan, and had lived for countless years. However, in terms of status, quite a few members of the Azure Dragon clan were higher than him.

“If the appearance of the ancestor’s Azure Dragon ring was made public, there’s no way it would become mine.” Emanuel’s thoughts whirled about in his mind, and then he made up his mind, laughing coldly in his heart. “Fortunately, this Garvey had never met the ancestor, and doesn’t know what the Azure Dragon ring looks like.”

Their ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’, as a Sovereign, naturally didn’t meet very often with his descendants.

In the Azure Dragon clan, only the sons and daughters of the Azure Dragon, those second generation members, were very close to the Azure Dragon. The third generation members had met him a few times as well. A few fourth generation members had met him as well. As for the others...only a very few genius-level clansmen had been granted an audience by the ancestor.

Garvey had never even seen the ancestor. Naturally, he didn’t recognize the Coiling Dragon ring.

After all, those who joined the Assembly of Elders had reached the Seven Star Fiend level, but that didn’t mean they were born very early on.

“Emanuel, what are you thinking about?” Garvey asked.

“Oh. There’s something I wish to discuss with Linley.” Emanuel said with a laugh.

Linley couldn’t help but grow puzzled. “I’ve never met him. What does he want with me?”

“If you want to chat with him, then just chat with him here.” Garvey laughed, but Emanuel shook his head and said solemnly, “Garvey, I have something very important I wish to discuss with Linley. Garvey, please go back on your own for now. Let me speak with Linley alone.”

“Not only do you want to chat, you want to chat with him alone?” Garvey was rather curious now.

Emanuel couldn't help but frown.

“Fine, fine.” Garvey laughed. Since Emanuel had made the request, it wasn't convenient for Garvey to persist. “Then I'll head out first. Right, Emanuel. We need to have a good discussing regarding the upcoming visit of the Indigo Emissary. I'll wait for you outside the hall. Hurry up.”

Emanuel immediately beamed. “Fine. I'll just chat right here in the hall. After I'm done, I'll immediately come out.”

“Right.” The handsome youth, ‘Garvey’, grinned towards the puzzled Linley. “Kid, work hard. I'll be waiting for you to join us in the Assembly of Elders.” As he spoke, he left the private room, closing the door as he left.

“Hmph, hmph, now that Garvey is gone, the ancestor's ring will be mine.” Emanuel couldn't help but feel excited. As he viewed it, this Linley was just a God. Even if a God had a ‘soul-protecting Sovereign artifact’, Emanuel could use a material attack to kill Linley. Naturally, he would then acquire the Sovereign artifact.

“Linley.” Emanuel smiled in a very warm, friendly manner.

“Elder.” Linley was highly suspicious. Why did this person want to speak with him alone?

As the saying went, men of talent were men of courage. Linley had fused three profound mysteries and fused with the ‘black stone’, and was very formidable to begin with. After the Ancestral Baptism, his one and only weakness, soul defense, had been improved upon significantly.

He had no fear of a Seven Star Fiend. Naturally, he was able to face this Emanuel calmly.

“Crackle...” Emanuel immediately set up his ‘Godrealm’, surrounding the entire private room with it.

Linley's face couldn't help but change. “Elder, what are you doing?”

Emanuel just smiled. “The conversation between us is very important. That's why I set up my Godrealm, to prevent others from eavesdropping.”

“Elder, might I ask what matter you have to discuss with me, Linley?” Linley's attitude remained very meek and humble.

“Linley, first take a read through the book we just gave you.” Emanuel smiled.

Linley was deeply puzzled, but he still flipped through that book discussing the history of the Four Divine Beasts clan. In front of Emanuel, Linley pretended to be astonished while flipping through it, but in his heart, he was pondering. “Previously, Emanuel had me leave, but now, suddenly, he asked me to stay. And have a private conversation? What is this about?”

While pretending to read and pretending to be astonished, he continued to ponder.

Linley currently had five souls, and so he could focus on doing five things at the same time. This pretense was thus quite simple for him.

“There’s nothing about me that should have attracted his interest.”

As Linley closed the book, he looked towards the bald Emanuel, then pretended to be ‘astonished’ and said, “Elder, our ancestor was a Sovereign? And all four Sovereigns died? How is this possible?”

“This is the truth.” Emanuel said with certainty. “Linley, you now understand the danger our clan is in.”

“Right. I understand.” Linley’s face was solemn.

This wasn’t a pretense. Linley was indeed very worried for the clan’s situation. After all, those eight great clans were staring at them like hungry tigers.

Emanuel said solemnly, “Linley, our Four Divine Beasts clan is facing this enormous crisis. Currently, what we need are true experts! True experts, aside from their own innate power, also need good divine artifacts. Linley, tell me, am I right?”

Linley nodded in agreement. “Divine artifacts are indeed important.”

Emanuel looked at Linley. “Linley, you have a Sovereign artifact, right?”

Sovereign artifact?

These words struck Linley like a bolt of lightning. The look on Linley’s face couldn’t help but change as his head trembled. Only Bebe and Delia knew about his possession of a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

Linley immediately regained his clarity.

“Elder, you are joking with me.” Linley stared at Emanuel.

Emanuel let out a chuckle. “Linley, in front of me, you can stop pretending. I’ll tell you this – I am a fourth generation member of the Azure Dragon clan, and I have personally met the ancestor.

“So what if you have?” Linley was extremely cautious right now.

Emanuel looked towards Linley’s finger, and Linley’s face couldn’t help but change. Emanuel laughed. “Linley, I’ll tell you that the ring you have on your finger is the ring which the ancestor previously wore, a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact...the Azure Dragon ring!”

“Azure Dragon ring?”

One thing after another flashed through Linley’s mind like lightning. In the blink of an eye, Linley understood so much.

“I had always suspected that the previous owner of this Coiling Dragon ring is a Sovereign. So it was my own ancestor. Right. Ten thousand years ago, the ancestor died, and the Coiling Dragon ring was thus lost.” Linley now completely understood. “And that drop of blood which allowed my body to transform...so it was the blood of the ancestor.”

The blood essence used to refine this Sovereign artifact was, without question, the blood of the Azure Dragon himself.

That drop of blood had caused Linley’s blood to become very pure as well.

“No wonder there were three drops of water-type Sovereign’s Might. The ancestor himself was a water-type Sovereign.” Linley now completely understood what Emanuel wanted, and he looked at him. “This Emanuel

had met with our ancestor, and so most likely he had seen the Coiling Dragon ring and was able to immediately recognize it.”

Linley’s thoughts spun rapidly, but his facial expressions had returned to normal.

“Oh, Azure Dragon ring?” Linley laughed. “Elder, since you recognize it, then I won’t deny it. This is indeed a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, but that was just in the past. It no longer is! Elder, think about it. The ancestor died. If his soul-protecting Sovereign artifact wasn’t broken, would he have died?”

Emanuel chuckled. “Hmph. When a Sovereign artifact is broken, it definitely won’t be completely destroyed. Otherwise, this Azure Dragon ring would be completely shattered.”

“Elder, you’ve said so much. What do you want?” Linley said solemnly.

Emanuel said solemnly, “Linley, given the rules of our clan, this Azure Dragon ring is one of the treasures of our Azure Dragon clan! A communal possession of the clan! If news that you are in possession of the Azure Dragon ring were to spread out, the clan would definitely confiscate it from you.”

Linley frowned.

“Confiscate?” After knowing that this was the Sovereign artifact of their ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’, Linley was indeed worried about this possibility. This Coiling Dragon ring wasn’t just a guarantee of his own strength; it was also a keepsake which cherished the memory of Grandpa Doehring.

There was no way Linley would give it up.

“Right. The clan is currently in a state of crisis. This sort of treasure definitely cannot be left on you, where it is wasted.” Emanuel said solemnly. “A good treasure has to be matched with an expert. Only then can its full power be drawn out.”

Linley let out a cold snort.

Emanuel continued, “If it is confiscated, this sort of treasure would be given to someone of at least the Seven Star Fiend level, and a formidable one. The Azure Dragon ring, in the hands of an ultimate expert...can cause a powerful Seven Star Fiend to become an Asura level expert.”

Linley naturally understood this logic.

It was precisely because he himself had this Coiling Dragon ring that he could ignore the difference which Gods and Highgods had in terms of the soul.

“Therefore, Linley, for the sake of the clan, and for your own sake, please give me this Azure Dragon ring.” Emanuel said.

“Do you think that actually going to happen?” Linley chuckled.

Emanuel said hurriedly, “I understand that you can’t bear to part with it. This is very understandable. How about this...I guarantee that so long as you give me the Azure Dragon ring, I will bestow upon you enormous wealth. A trillion inkstones. What do you say?”

A trillion inkstones?

This person really was taking him for an inexperienced God.

“No need.” Linley shook his head.

Emanuel's face sank. "Linley, you should know that for me, killing you is simplicity itself." In his heart, however, Emanuel knew that first of all, it was forbidden for the Azure Dragon clansmen to casually kill each other, and secondly, he was worried that he wouldn't be able to kill Linley in one blow.

This was because Linley had a Sovereign artifact, hence his worry.

If Linley were to flee from this private room, things would be complicated. After all, outside the private room, there was Elder 'Garvey', as well as the black-robed men.

"Killing me is simplicity itself? Didn't you just say I have a Sovereign artifact?" Linley snickered. "I have a Sovereign artifact, but you'll be able to kill me in one blow? What's more, the rules of the clan state that clansmen are not permitted to kill each other."

"Hmph."

Emanuel let out a cold snort. "If I, an Elder, were to kill you, who would dare interfere? Linley, I'll give you a final chance. I am willing to use a drop of Sovereign's Might to trade for your Azure Dragon ring. In addition, I am also willing to create a contract bond with you and guarantee that I won't kill you to prevent the secret from being exposed. What do you say?"

"Sovereign's Might?" Linley glanced at Emanuel in surprise. "This baldy is actually willing to part with it?"

Linley knew very well that although Sovereign's Might was precious, it was far inferior to a Sovereign artifact. Sovereign's Might was a one-use item. Almighty Sovereigns were able to easily bestow more Sovereign's might. To Sovereign's, Sovereign's Might was something that they could provide as much of as was needed!

But Sovereign artifacts were different.

Sovereign artifacts were to Sovereigns what divine artifacts were to Deities. To create a Sovereign artifact, the Sovereign had to expend both time and effort. It was very difficult, which was why Sovereign artifacts were incomparably precious.

"Right. Sovereign's Might." Emanuel laughed coldly. "This drop of Sovereign's Might is one of my most important treasures. Linley, I hope you won't force me."

An attempt to cow him through threats?

Most likely, an ordinary God, when faced with this circumstance, would have surrendered in fear long ago and offered the Sovereign artifact. But Linley was different. Because...even if he had to fight Emanuel head on, Linley wouldn't fear him at all.

"Force you? How am I forcing you?" Linley smirked as he spoke.

Emanuel's gaze instantly grew cold, and rage began to fill his chest. The angry Emanuel let out a furious snort. "You are looking for death!" Ignoring all else, Emanuel sent a backhand blow directly towards Linley.

He was hoping to kill Linley with a single blow, then seize the Sovereign artifact.

"Boom..."

The power of this slap caused Linley to feel the whole world was turning dark.

Linley's right hand immediately transformed into a draconic claw, colliding with that palm.

“BANG!” Linley was sent flying outwards, smashing viciously against the door of that secret room. The door blew apart, and Linley immediately flew out. “Save me, Elder Garvey, save me!” Linley’s voice was like a thunderclap, echoing throughout the main hall.

Emanuel’s face instantly turned exceedingly ugly to behold. “He’s going to die!”

“Swish!” Emanuel immediately flew out from the private room.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 14, The Challenge

As Linley was sent smashing to the corridor outside, a hint of blood appeared at the corner of his lips.

He immediately launched himself from the ground, transforming into a ray of light and scurrying towards the main hall. Linley laughed coldly to himself, “Emanuel thinks he can kill me? However, unless it becomes necessary, there’s no rush for me to reveal my power.” At the same moment Linley was fleeing, he was also shouting, “Elder Garvey, save me!”

The explosion of the door, and Linley’s loud shout...given the hearing prowess of Highgods, how could they not hear this?

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

From afar, multiple figures flew over at high speed, with the handsome youth, Garvey, at their head.

“Don’t even think about escape!” An angry voice rang out, and Emanuel’s body flashed out in pursuit of Linley, as fast as an arrow.

Linley, seeing Garvey and the black-robed men, immediately fled behind them. Only now did he say, “Elder Garvey, Elder Emanuel wants to kill me!” When Garvey heard this, his handsome face became filled with anger.

“Emanuel, what are you doing!” Garvey thundered.

The bald Emanuel came to a halt, staring angrily at Linley, then looked at Garvey. “Garvey, step aside.”

“Linley is our clansman. Why do you want to kill him?” Garvey was extremely upset. “So the reason you wanted to speak to him privately was so you could kill him.”

“No, that’s not it.”

Emanuel said hurriedly. Emanuel, seeing Garvey appear, knew that this situation had just grown complicated. This was what he had feared the most. But he was astonished as well. “That palm blow of mine actually didn’t kill Linley. Sovereign artifacts truly are powerful and useful in protecting one’s life.”

Linley had blood dribbling from his lips, and his face was ashen.

Emanuel had believed that the reason he wasn’t able to kill Linley with one blow was because of the Coiling Dragon ring.

He didn’t realize...

That the blood leaking from the corner of Linley’s lips and his ashen face were all part of Linley’s pretense.

“A simple palm like that, given my defense, won’t be able to harm me at all.” Linley snickered internally. “However, it’s best to hide my true strength for now.” After having arrived in the Four Divine Beasts clan, he had decided to first spend some time quietly accompanying his family and friends. After he became a Highgod, he would then go out to do battle.

In addition, after he became a Highgod, he would be of greater use.

He couldn't reveal his strength for now. Once he did, his peaceful days would be over.

"Linley, tell me, what is this about?" Garvey looked at Linley.

"Elder Garvey, I didn't offend Elder Emanuel at all, but for no reason at all, he wants to kill me." Linley said. The matter regarding the Coiling Dragon ring definitely couldn't be revealed. By now, Linley had also changed the appearance of the Coiling Dragon ring.

Even divine artifacts could be changed in appearance, and so Sovereign artifacts naturally could as well.

Linley regretted not having changed the appearance of the Coiling Dragon ring in the past. First of all, nobody had ever discovered it, and so he had not been vigilant. Secondly, as his power had increased, so too had his self-confidence. But who would have imagined that this would happen?"

"Emanuel?" Garvey looked towards him.

"Garvey, do you believe me or believe him?" Emanuel's rage was rising, and his face was exceedingly ugly. "This Linley offended me. Today, I will definitely kill him. Garvey, out of the way."

The black-robed men at the corridor were all surprised. This Emanuel really had lost his self-control.

"Emanuel!" Garvey barked coldly. "We are in the Skyrise Mountains! The rules of the clan are that we are not to wantonly slaughter each other. What are you doing!"

"Elder Emanuel, I truly wish to know why you want to kill me." Linley stared at Emanuel as he spoke.

"Right. Why do you want to kill him?" Garvey also looked at him.

Emanuel stared furiously at Linley, his eyes spitting fire. He was angry. Angry that Linley didn't know what was good for him. "I was willing to offer a drop of Sovereign's Might, but he still wasn't willing. He forced my hand." Emanuel had already made his decision.

"Elder Emanuel, why are you so angry? It seems as though I should be the angry one." Linley laughed coldly. "If push comes to shove, we can just fight to the end, until 'either the fish dies or the net breaks'!"

Emanuel's heart clenched.

What did he fear, right now?

Not Garvey's interference. He was afraid that Linley would publicly announce the fact that he had the Azure Dragon ring. Once this was made public...even if the clan didn't confiscate it, there was no way it would go to Emanuel.

"Fine, Linley." Emanuel snickered. "Aren't you the fierce one."

"Me, fierce? It is that you go too far." Linley replied.

The nearby Garvey as well as the black-robed men were mystified. They didn't know what Linley and Emanuel were talking about.

"Elder Emanuel, I, as a junior, would like to offer you a few words!" Linley stared at Emanuel, a hint of a smile at the corner of his lips. "Sometimes, it's best not to be too greedy. Greed can cause you to lose your life. What belongs to you is yours. What doesn't belong to you will never be yours."

Emanuel began to laugh from rage.

“Kid, I’ll send your words right back to you.” Emanuel said furiously. “Don’t be too greedy. Greed can cause you to lose your life!”

“Oh? Lose my life?” Linley began to laugh. “Most venerable Elder, you are a powerful Seven Star Fiend, while I am just a mere God. I admit that my power is inferior to yours, and it wouldn’t be hard for you to take my life, but you can’t go too far and be too abusive.”

“What are you two talking about!” Garvey said angrily.

“Emanuel.” Garvey said, “If Linley truly has acted untowardly, you can go ahead and speak to the Assembly of Elders, who will definitely carry out a punishment against Linley.”

Emanuel took a deep breath, then said slowly, “Linley, the offense you have given me is unpardonable. I...issue you a challenge to a life-and-death duel!”

“Life-and-death duel?”

Garvey and the black-robed men on the corridor were all stunned. Garvey stared, astonished, at Emanuel, then sent with divine sense, “Emanuel, what are you doing? He’s just a God. If you really want to kill him, just report this to the Assembly of Elders. Why a life-and-death duel?”

But how could Garvey know that Emanuel wanted to personally kill Linley and rob him of his Azure Dragon ring?

Those black-robed men all looked at Linley, a hint of pity in their eyes.

“Can I ask, what is this life-and-death duel?” Linley’s voice rang out.

Immediately, Elder Garvey and the others were all amazed. Linley didn’t even know what a life-and-death duel was?

Garvey let out a secret sigh, feeling grief for Linley. In the end, he explained, “Linley, there are many people in the clan. With so many people together, it’s impossible for there to be no conflicts at all. Once the conflicts reach a certain level where neither side will rest until the other is dead, then these conflicts will have become irreconcilable. Although the rules of the clan state that clansmen are not permitted to kill each other, when the hatred grows too great, sometimes even the mediation of the clan is useless.”

“At this time, the only option is a ‘life-and-death duel’!”

Garvey said solemnly, “The life-and-death duel is a brutal duel, with two people taking part and the duel only concluding upon one side’s death. But of course, if the winner spares the loser’s life, that’s permitted as well. However, generally speaking, in a life-and-death duel, both sides won’t end it until the other is dead.”

Hearing this, Linley now understood.

He couldn’t help but feel his rage grow. “This Emanuel really doesn’t want to leave me any options at all.”

“Can it be that I have to accept his challenge?” Linley asked.

“You can refuse it.” Garvey said. “However, even if you refuse it, he can still make an application to the Assembly of Elders. Once the Assembly of Elders approves it, even if you refuse...you still have to take part in the life-and-death duel.”

“Haha...” Linley began to laugh. “Assembly of Elders?”

Emanuel himself was a member of the Assembly of Elders. If Emanuel went to apply for a life-and-death duel, how could it not pass?

“Linley, if you regret it, it isn’t too late yet.” Emanuel laughed coldly. “My conditions haven’t changed. I can spare your life.” Emanuel’s request was to use a drop of Sovereign’s Might in exchange for the Coiling Dragon ring.

Linley looked at him. Simply looked at him, with eyes as cold as ice.

“It isn’t too late for me if I regret it?” Linley had a hint of a satirical smile on his face.

“Right.” Emanuel nodded.

“Emanuel, I’ll tell you this.” Linley snickered. “I refuse your life-and-death challenge!”

“Your refusal is futile.” Emanuel said.

Linley snickered. “I’m refusing right now. As for whether or not the Assembly of Elders will approve your request, I can’t be bothered to care. I’ll tell you one thing as well...Emanuel, if you regret it now, it isn’t too late for you. In the future, even if you regret it, it will be too late.”

After speaking, Linley turned his head and left, his face a frozen mask.

Linley truly had the urge to kill now!

“Originally, I wanted to continue my peaceful life until becoming a Highgod. Emanuel, you forced me!” Linley wouldn’t hesitate any longer. If he truly had to participate in a life-and-death duel, he would definitely kill Emanuel!

Seeing Linley’s back as he walked away, Emanuel laughed coldly.

“Refuse? Will your refusal matter?” Emanuel chuckled. “When the time comes, it won’t matter even if you regret it.” Emanuel shook his head, then left, not paying any attention to Garvey.

Garvey let out a sigh.

“What a pity for this genius. He is going to die.” Garvey didn’t think Linley had any chance at life. Emanuel was a fourth generation member of the clan. His father was a third generation member, while his paternal grandmother was of the second generation.

In the entire Azure Dragon clan, there were only two members of the second generation, a pair of siblings, brother and sister. The first was the Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan, the son of the ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’. The other was the sister of the Patriarch.

In the clan, Emanuel’s status wasn’t that high, but his influence was significant.

As for Garvey? He had come countless tens of thousands of generations later. Although he was also a Seven Star Fiend, his influence was naturally inferior.

Late at night. The Violet Moon hung high in the sky.

Linley flew by himself on Dragon Avenue. He clearly remembered the way back home.

“This Coiling Dragon ring.” Linley lowered his head, glancing at it. In his mind, he couldn’t help but think back to so many scenes from his childhood.

Because of the Coiling Dragon ring, he had met Grandpa Doehring.

Because of Grandpa Doehring, he had become a powerful expert.

Over the many years, because of the Coiling Dragon ring, he was able to compensate for the difference in his soul when compared to Highgods. Because of the Coiling Dragon ring, he dared to do battle against Seven Star Fiends. Unconsciously...

His entire life had become intertwined with the Coiling Dragon ring.

“Nobody should even dream of trying to take my Coiling Dragon ring from me.” Linley said softly.

“If I truly am forced to take part in a life-and-death duel.” Linley’s gaze was cold and clear. “I will definitely kill that Emanuel. Right now, he is the only one who knows that I have this Coiling Dragon ring. He definitely won’t be so stupid as to spread the news. If I kill him, no one else will know about it.”

That very day, Emanuel returned and immediately went to find the three Elders who were in charge of managing the ‘life-and-death duels’.

Ordinary duels could be agreed to by three Elders.

“Emanuel, why did you summon the three of us in such a rush?” Two men, one woman. The three were dressed in resplendent azure armor with golden patterns, and a billowing cape covered with complicated magic runes.

Three Elders.

“There’s a God who has offended me. He holds me in no regard at all.” Emanuel said angrily. “I am going to kill him. I’m applying for a life-and-death duel. The three of you, help me out and approve this request.” As he spoke, he handed over a piece of paper.

The three Elders glanced at the paper, then looked at each other.

This was a joke, right?

An Elder was going to engage in a life-and-death duel to kill a God?

The golden-haired woman laughed. “Emanuel, as someone who has a revered position as an Elder, how can you possibly squabble with the likes of a God?”

“I am definitely going to kill him.” Emanuel said.

Another Elder, a silver-haired old man, laughed. “Emanuel, if you really want to kill him, just tell us the reason he offended you. We’ll send people to go arrest him. In accordance with the rules of the clan, we can execute him for having offended an Elder. Why the need for some life-and-death duel? You, a venerable Elder, are going to duel a God. Isn’t this laughable?”

“The three of you, just consider this being me, Emanuel, asking the three of you to help me out. Alright?” Emanuel said.

The three exchanged glances.

“Fine. We agree.” The three Elders each withdrew a feather quill, recording their names on the paper.

Emanuel, seeing this, laughed. In his heart, he said to himself, “Linley, it’s now too late for you, even if you regret it.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 15, Life-And-Death Duel

The morning sun had just risen, and the sanguine light of the Blood Sun could be seen peeking through the thin mists of the gorge. Linley walked out from his room as well.

“The weather’s not bad.” Linley took a deep breath, letting the cool air fill his chest.

“Swoosh!” A human figure jumped down from above. “Boss, it seems you are in a good mood.” Bebe laughed. Bebe lived on the second floor of this building.

“Yes, a pretty good mood. It’s been eighty two years since we came to the Skyrise Mountains, and I haven’t had a good battle this entire time, nor have I killed anyone. But I’m about to go kill someone and about to have a good battle. Of course my mood is good.” Linley laughed.

Bebe was puzzled. “Boss, what do you mean by this?”

“No rush. You’ll know soon enough.” Linley said.

Bebe, seeing that Linley was intentionally being mysterious, couldn’t help but purse his lips. At this time, Delia also walked out from the room, and Bebe immediately went to greet her. “Delia, the Boss says that he is about to engage in a battle and kill someone. Do you know what this is about?”

“Is that so?” Puzzled, Delia turned her head to look towards Linley.

Linley chuckled. Suddenly, the sound of the wind could be heard. He immediately raised his head to look.

Multiple figures flew down from the skies, all dressed in the battle armor uniform of the Azure Dragon clan. Linley laughed calmly. “They are here.” Bebe and Delia raised their head to look, puzzled. They saw three azure armored warriors fly over.

“Linley!” The leader recognized Linley right away. Clearly, the Assembly of Elders, when giving the order, had provided a clear description of Linley’s appearance as well.

“Everyone, is there something you need?” Linley said.

The leader of the azure armored warriors sighed inwardly. He, too, didn’t understand how a God could have offended one of the lofty, high-ranked Elders. But he still said, “Linley, Lord Emanuel has issued a life-and-death challenge. The Assembly of Elders has already approved it. Come with us.”

“Right now?” Linley was rather surprised.

The approval of the application by the Assembly of Elders was something which Linley had predicted long ago, but for the duel to start immediately was outside of Linley’s expectations.

“The life-and-death duel will be held today during noon. Right now, you just need to get there in advance.” The azure armored warrior said. In his heart, he still felt some sympathy for Linley. After all, as he saw it...

Linley was a bottom-ranked figure of the clan, not too different from patrol warriors like them.

But although they sympathized for Linley, there was no way they could help out.

“Boss, what is it?” Bebe said frantically.

“Linley, what is this ‘life-and-death duel’?” Delia said urgently as well.

Linley laughed, “In our clan, an ‘Elder Emanuel’ insists on killing me. Fortunately, at that time, Elder Garvey was present, but in the end, Elder Emanuel still issued me a ‘life-and-death duel’. Either he dies or I die.”

“Elder?” Delia began to worry.

“Boss, are you confident?” Bebe asked.

They were certain of Linley’s strength, but the opponent was one of the clan’s Elders, after all. In the past eighty years, they had gained an understanding of the Assembly of Elders. To enter the Assembly of Elders, the first requirement was to reach the Seven Star Fiend level.

Linley sent mentally, “Delia, Bebe, don’t worry. If this was before my Ancestral Baptism, I wouldn’t be completely certain, but after having undergone the Ancestral Baptism, I am still confident.”

Delia immediately relaxed. She trusted Linley.

“Linley, is the reason he wants to kill you...because of the Coiling Dragon ring?” Delia sent through divine sense.

Linley nodded, sending back through divine sense, “I myself learned just now that this Sovereign artifact, the Coiling Dragon ring, had actually belonged to the ancestor of our Azure Dragon clan. Emanuel recognized it at a single glance.”

Bebe and Delia now both understood.

They both could understand the powerful allure of a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. No wonder Emanuel was acting this way.

“Linley, can you leave now?” The azure armored warrior said.

These azure armored warriors actually weren’t in a rush. The life-and-death duel would only be held at noon. For Elder Emanuel, he would just come over from his residence when the time came. But Linley, as the person of lower status, had to arrive earlier.

“It doesn’t start until noon. Why the rush?” Bebe said unhappily.

“The three of you, what are you doing?” Several figures flew over at high speed. It was Baruch and several other clansmen. They, too, had begun to worry after seeing the azure armored warriors fly over. These azure armored warriors’ arrival definitely portended an important matter.

“Elder Emanuel is about to initiate a life-and-death duel with Linley. The Assembly of Elders has already approved it.” An azure armored warrior said.

Baruch and the others were stunned, their eyes filled with disbelief.

“The Elder and Linley?” They couldn’t accept this.

“A revered, venerable Elder...how can he challenge Linley to a life-and-death duel?” Hazard said furiously. Linley’s arrival had caused the status of their Yulan branch to rise considerably in recent days. In addition, all of them were fond of this descendant of theirs, Linley.

An Elder, challenging a God? This was too unfair!

“The Assembly of Elders has already approved it. There’s no way to change it.” The leader of the azure armored warriors said. “Unless you can ask the Patriarch to intervene.”

In the Azure Dragon clan, without question, the person of the highest status was the Patriarch. He was the son of their ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’. When the Azure Dragon had been alive, he had naturally expended enormous amounts of effort in training and cultivating his son. One could imagine how powerful the Patriarch was.

In the clan, his word was supreme.

“Linley, what is it?” Tarosse, Dylin, and the others flew out. Others immediately began to explain the situation to them. Tarosse and the others were astonished as well that an Elder of the clan was actually challenging Linley to a life-and-death battle.”

“Don’t worry, everyone.” Linley said calmly, then looked at the azure armored warrior. “Let’s go.”

The leader of the azure armored warriors nodded.

“Can we go watch the duel?” Delia immediately asked.

The leader of the azure armored warriors glanced at the crowd, then nodded. “This is Linley’s last battle anyways. You can go watch it if you want.” As he spoke, the three azure armored warriors took Linley with them, flying into the air.

Delia, Bebe, Baruch, as well as even Tarosse, Dylin, and the others all immediately followed.

An Elder of the clan was going to initiate a life-and-death duel with a God. This news wasn’t actually known by many throughout the various levels of the clan. At the higher levels, however, this news spread very quickly, especially amongst the Elders themselves, who quickly learned of this.

“Emanuel, that kid...he’s going to engage in a life-and-death duel with a junior? Did I mishear something?” A muscular man with short azure hair said with a frown.

“Uncle, there’s no mistake. Emanuel really is going to have a life-and-death duel with a God.” The other person, a tall man with brown hair, spoke out. The two of them were dressed in that azure armor with golden embroidery, as well as the cape with unusual magic runes.

Both were Elders of the clan.

“Let’s go take a look.” The azure haired man said.

“Today, quite a few people will be watching.” The brown-haired man laughed.

“Will the Patriarch attend?”

“The Patriarch most likely doesn’t even know about this. I hear that today, he is together with the Indigo Emissary. This visit by the Indigo Emissary seems to be regarding a rather weighty matter.” The brown-haired man said, rather puzzled.

“An important affair? Could it be that we are about to start fighting with the eight great clans?” The azure-haired man was rather worried.

“I’m not sure. We’ll know when the Patriarch returns.” The brown-haired man shook his head.

While chatting, the two flew towards the direction of ‘Death Valley’, the place which the Azure Dragon clan used for carrying out ‘life-and-death duels’.

Quite a few people had arrived at Death Valley today. Aside from the high level members of the clan and Linley’s people, there were also a large number of patrol warriors who knew about this matter. Bored, they came to watch this battle.

This was an Elder against a God!

Something like this was something which they wouldn’t see even in a hundred million years within the clan.

“That Emanuel really does put on airs.” Bebe said unhappily. “We’ve already arrived, but he still hasn’t shown himself. Perhaps it really will be like what the azure armored warriors said and that he won’t come out until noon.”

Linley laughed as he stood above Death Valley. “Bebe, don’t be impatient.”

“Linley, you seem completely confident.” Tarosse laughed.

“I had wanted to live the peaceful life for a bit longer, after having returned to the Azure Dragon clan. It seems that won’t be possible any longer.” Linley swept his gaze across Death Valley. Currently, quite a few Elders of the clan had already arrived. But of course, most of the spectators were azure armored warriors.

There were thousands of azure armored warriors present, and they were all chatting amongst themselves.

“I hear that today, the God who is being challenged by the Elder to a life-and-death duel is named Linley. Which one of those guys is Linley?”

“That one, the one with brown hair. The one standing next to the kid with the straw hat.” Someone immediately pointed him out. Amongst the patrolling guards who had come to watch this duel, information regarding Linley had quickly spread out.

“What a pity. A God is going to die today.”

“I wonder why Elder Emanuel is acting this way towards a God. If he wants to kill a God, he doesn’t need to go to all this trouble.”

“The Elder is going a bit too far. Linley is quite impressive as well, that he actually has the courage to come.”

It was natural for people to pity the weak, and of course the patrolling guards were also considered commoners within the clan, those of the lowest rung. In the bottom of their hearts, they were filled with some fear with respect to those venerable, lofty Elders to begin with. It was only natural for them to feel sympathy for Linley and stand on his side.

But of course, although in their hearts, they stood with Linley, they wouldn’t dare display it.

“Elder Emanuel has arrived!” Someone suddenly called out.

Immediately, everyone turned to look. Linley, hearing the commotion, also turned his head to look. From mid-air, the bald Emanuel, dressed in the garb reserved for Elders, came flying down alongside several other Elders.

“They finally came.” Linley looked at him.

Emanuel looked back at him. “He’s bold at least.” Emanuel had a hint of a smile at the corner of his lips. He swept his gaze across Linley, and saw the flash of light from the ring on Linley’s finger. He couldn’t help but grow excited.

He knew that was a Sovereign artifact!

“Fortunately, he didn’t flee last night.” The previous day, Emanuel had ordered that the gorge be completely sealed off from above, precisely to defend against Linley fleeing.

“In accordance with the rules of the clan, once conflicts reach an irreconcilable level, a life-and-death duel will be initiated. No regrets in death! Today, the parties to this life-and-death duel are Emanuel and Linley!” An Elder hovered in midair and said in a loud voice.

The entire Death Valley became silent, with no one saying a word.

“Gentlemen, make your preparations.” The Elder said calmly.

Emanuel flew over gracefully to the center of Death Valley, immediately looking arrogantly towards Linley.

“Boss, go kick that Elder’s ass and kill him.” Bebe sent through divine sense.

“Linley, be careful.” Delia said.

Linley just laughed calmly, then flew straight to the center of Death Valley as well, staring directly at the distant Emanuel. In the entire Death Valley, everyone, Elders and patrolling warriors alike, had fallen silent.

“Begin, then.” The Elder shouted.

Linley’s face instantly turned solemn.

“Linley, as long as you admit defeat, I can spare your life.” Emanuel floated down, laughing calmly as he spoke, as though he held Linley’s life in his hand.

“Admit defeat?”

Linley let out an emotionless chuckle. “Today is a life-and-death duel. Either you die or I die.”

Immediately, there was an enormous commotion. The Elders and the patrolling warriors were all rather astonished. As they saw it, Linley was going to die for certain. For Emanuel to be able to say what he had just said could already be considered quite benevolent and merciful. But Linley had actually refused.

“Hmph. It is you who is asking for death.” Emanuel’s face immediately turned cold.

Suddenly, Emanuel frowned. From the corner of his eyes, he noticed Delia, Bebe, Cesar, and the others standing at the corner of Death Valley.

“These people look rather familiar. It seems I’ve seen them somewhere before.” Emanuel had this sudden thought, but instantly, the thought disappeared. After all, a battle was about to begin. He couldn’t lose his concentration.

“BOOM!” An explosion of energy.

Linley’s entire body was instantly covered with a large number of draconic scales. Those azure-golden scales stretched across his entire body as those fierce spikes erupted from his forehead and spine. His draconic tail, flashing with metallic light, began to sway gently.

“Come!” Linley stared coldly with his dark golden eyes towards his opponent.

“It’s him?” Elder Garvey was shocked.

“It’s him!” The faces of the ten or so Elders who were watching from afar instantly changed.

The scryer recording which had spread to them from Miluo Island. All of the high level members of the Azure Dragon clan had viewed it. They all knew...that in the Infernal Realm, there was an expert of the Azure Dragon clan whose body emitted sharp spikes when Dragonformed.

The members of the clan had never before seen this sort of transformation. After all, in normal circumstances, how could the descendants of the Four Divine Beasts clan be forced to drink the dragon’s blood of a magical beast of the ninth rank, an Armored Razorback Wurm, in order to activate Dragonblood in their veins?

The formerly confident Emanuel’s face immediately changed as well.

“It’s him! That powerful, mysterious clansman of ours who appeared in Miluo Island!” Emanuel’s mind was in a state of chaos now, and then he glanced sideways at Delia, Bebe, and the others. “Right. Now I remember where I saw them. In that scryer recording! When that enormous cube was chopped apart, those people were by the side of that clansman of ours!”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 16, No Mercy!

In the air above the Skyrite Mountains. A tall, powerful figure slashed through the skies, his long robe fluttering as he arrived to a high point above Dragon Avenue, at the ‘Dragonhead’ location, where there was an enormous castle.

His azure hair fluttered in the breeze. His cold, grim face appeared to have been chiseled out by knives. This person descended directly in front of the castle gates.

The patrolling soldiers in front of the castle gate, upon seeing this person, immediately bowed with respect. “Patriarch!”

The person was the awe-inspiring Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan, the number one expert of the Azure Dragon clan... Gislason [Gai’si’lei’seng] Redding! The son of the Sovereign ‘Azure Dragon’. Gislason’s power was simply infathomable.

“Mmm. Why are none of the Elders present in the castle?” Gislason frowned. He had been able to instantly tell that the castle had no Elders within it.

“The Elders all went to Death Valley to watch a life-and-death duel.” A patrol warrior immediately replied.

“Life-and-death duel?” Patriarch Gislason frowned. “A single life-and-death duel attracted so many Elders? What’s this about?”

“Elder Emanuel initiated a life-and-death duel against a God named Linley.” The patrol warrior said.

“Linley? A God?” Gislason was utterly confused. “A venerable Elder, engaging in a life-and-death duel with a God? Hmph.” A cold snort. The Patriarch ‘Gislason’ transformed into a streak of light, flying at high speed towards Death Valley.

At this moment, the situation at Death Valley was very peculiar.

The duel had begun, but Elder Emanuel, who clearly should have had the upper hand, was actually hesitating. He hadn’t attacked yet, and his face was filled with shock, fear, anger, and regret!

“It’s actually him! It’s actually him!!!”

Emanuel was utterly enraged. “He has the Azure Dragon ring. His soul defense is definitely very powerful. But his body...” Emanuel had originally been planning to use ‘material attacks’ to gain victory. He was very confident, as his own body was very powerful. But he had seen the scryer recording...

Emanuel knew very well that Linley’s body was even tougher than his!

Who would have imagined that Linley was actually that expert who had appeared at Miluo Island.

“Emanuel, what is it? You want to let me go first?” Linley laughed coldly.

Instantly, the entire Death Valley buzzed with conversation. Those patrol warriors, in particular, were puzzled as to why Emanuel still hadn’t attacked.

“Linley...” Emanuel wanted to say something.

“Since you are letting me go first out of courtesy, Elder, then I’ll go first.” Linley said coldly, and then he exploded with speed, transforming into a blur that slashed through the skies. Emanuel immediately let out an explosive shout...

“Rumble...” The world suddenly gave birth to enormous watery waves, and these waves swept down towards Linley. And then, instantly, the wave transformed into mist, ensconcing Linley within. For a moment, Linley wasn’t able to see what was going on in front of him.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

Sharp icy bolts suddenly emerged from the mist, all of the icy bolts arcing in curved lines. The countless icy arrows were actually all arcing in different curved lines towards Linley, and as the icy arrows drew near, they actually tore the skies apart...

Multiple tears in space appeared.

“He lives up to being an Elder.” Linley said to himself.

Linley didn’t even dodge. He just stood there in mid-air, like a celestial divinity.

Rays of divine earth power emerged from Linley, sweeping outwards with Linley at the center. Immediately, that dim earthen yellow light spread out, forming an enormous sphere that was five hundred meters in diameter. Emanuel was unable to dodge, and he was immediately trapped within.

Blackstone Space!

The terrifying gravitational pull, when applied to those icy arrows, caused their direction to change slightly. This slight change in direction caused the vast majority of the icy arrows to very naturally miss their mark, and be unable to converge on the target.

“Crunch!” “Crunch!” “Crunch!”

Eight icy arrows struck Linley, but a clear sound like metal clashing on metal rang out. The icy arrows immediately shattered, while only a few white spots were left on Linley’s draconic scales.

“What!” Emanuel’s face changed dramatically.

Although he had been mentally prepared already, he was still astonished at Linley’s defensive power.

“Terrible!” Emanuel could feel that his body was under the effect of that inexhaustible gravitational power. He immediately wanted to throw it off, but in an instant, the downwards gravitational pull suddenly transformed into a pull towards Linley’s direction.

“You want to flee?” Linley let out an angry laugh, then threw himself towards Emanuel.

Emanuel’s speed was naturally inferior to Linley, now that he also had to fight off the gravity.

“How did this come to pass?” The thousands of patrol warriors were all flabbergasted. This life-and-death duel which they had been certain was going to be one-sided was indeed one-sided, but the person who had the advantage was that ‘God’.

“This Linley, how can he...” These people only stared, their tongues tied.

“Linley. He isn’t a God. He definitely isn’t.”

For now, let’s ignore the stupefied patrol warriors. Those Elders who were watching the battle from the side, after seeing Linley’s transformation, grew certain in their hearts.

“Emanuel is doomed, this time!”

“He’s kicked a steel board this time.”

Those Elders all maintained their silence. After all, Emanuel was participating in a life-and-death duel. It wasn’t appropriate for them to intervene.

“Bastard.” Trapped in the gravitational sphere, Emanuel was like an ordinary person trapped in quicksand, finding movement incredibly difficult. Linley, however, was drawing near at astonishing speed. Emanuel didn’t dare to engage in close-quarters combat with Linley.

“Aaaaaah!”

Emanuel seemed to have gone insane as he let out a bellow.

“Crackle...” Strangely, a large amount of ice appeared out of nowhere, forming an enormous, thick wall of ice directly in front of Emanuel, the blocks of ice flashing with dazzling light. This wall of thick ice was also affected by the powerful gravity...

And they flew at high speed against Linley!

Not only was the wall of ice affected by the gravity, Emanuel himself also intentionally sent the ice wall flying towards Linley.

In an instant, the ice wall reached Linley’s body.

“Break!” Linley let out a low growl. His right fist, carrying boundless power, utilized the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’ of the Laws of the Earth, smashing down viciously against one point on the icy wall.

“BANG!” The entire icy wall trembled, then exploded into countless shards of ice.

As Linley was flying past those shattered shards of ice, Emanuel had managed to flee to the edges of the gravitational field. But right at this moment, Emanuel actually stopped fleeing, turning and letting out a low roar...

Suddenly, an Azure Dragon Phantom appeared behind Emanuel, which stared at Linley with a pair of icy eyes, preparing to let loose a low roar.

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

“Not good.” Linley’s face changed.

A blurry azure light instantly shot towards Linley, who felt his head grow numb for a moment before he instantly regained clarity. But Linley discovered...that both Emanuel as well as the countless distant spectators suddenly began to move much faster.

“Time?” Linley immediately understood.

In that instant, the region where Linley had been had its time slowed down. For every ten seconds which passed for others, one second would pass for Linley. This allowed Emanuel to flee from Linley's gravitational field.

"I finally escaped." Emanuel immediately flew to the far end of Death Valley.

"Emanuel, you won't be able to flee." Linley flew over.

"Halt!" Emanuel furiously shouted.

Linley was startled, but he still halted. With a cold laugh, he said, "Emanuel, what, you have something you want to say?"

"I acknowledge your strength. I admit defeat. Let's just bring an end to this life-and-death duel." Emanuel sent through divine sense. "It's my fault for being blind. I didn't realize you were an expert. Let's just leave it here."

"Leave it here?" Linley threw himself forward once more.

"Linley, I don't want that Azure Dragon ring anymore." Emanuel said hurriedly. "I originally thought you were a God. Who would have imagined...that this Azure Dragon ring, when carried by you, can still unleash such tremendous power. I won't try to take it."

Linley just laughed coldly.

When Emanuel had thought he was weak, Emanuel wanted to kill him. But now he was submitting tamely. However, without a doubt, currently the only outsider who knew that Linley was in possession of the Coiling Dragon ring was Emanuel. If he killed Emanuel, then there was no longer any danger of outsiders finding out.

Kill!

"I admit defeat!" Emanuel's voice rang out throughout Death Valley.

"Eh?" Linley was stunned.

Emanuel was actually so shameless as to directly admit defeat in the midst of a life-and-death duel. "Can it be that this Emanuel doesn't know that there are only two possible outcomes of a life-and-death duel? One is fighting to the death, while the other is the victor sparing the life of the loser!"

Admitting defeat in a life-and-death duel was meaningless!

"He admitted defeat?" The many patrolling warriors and Elders were all astonished. As for Delia, Bebe, and the others, they grew excited.

"Linley, since Emanuel has admitted defeat, just spare him." An Elder said loudly. But even he couldn't break the rules of a life-and-death duel. Only Linley could make the decision to spare Emanuel.

"Right, Linley. He's admitted defeat. Just forget it." The other Elders spoke out as well.

At present, in their hearts, they had already begun to consider Linley as an expert on the same level as them.

Although Emanuel felt humiliated in his heart, he still knew very clearly: "This Linley's body is so incredibly powerful, and he has a Sovereign artifact for soul defense. Although the Sovereign artifact is damaged, it still isn't something I can break through."

Emanuel couldn't see any hope of victory for himself.

He didn't want to die!

"Spare him?" Linley's dark golden eyes had a cold light flash through them. Suddenly, a terrifying howl rang out, and Linley's body slashed through the skies, charging towards the distant Emanuel. Showing no mercy at all!

"You forced me into a life-and-death duel, and now you want me to spare you? In your dreams!" Linley's furious roar echoed nonstop throughout Death Valley.

Emanuel immediately turned and fled, but Emanuel didn't leave the confines of Death Valley. If a person was to truly violate the laws of a life-and-death duel and flee out of Death Valley, the entire Azure Dragon clan would chase after him, and he would, without any question, die.

Thus, he could only dodge and evade within Death Valley.

Linley pursued at high speed.

"You won't be able to escape." Linley, seizing the opportunity, once again unleashed his Blackstone Space, directly capturing Emanuel within the pull of his gravitational sphere. Emanuel's speed immediately slowed dramatically, and Linley laughed coldly as he charged over.

But right at this moment...

"Swoosh!" Emanuel threw out a ray of white light from his hand.

"Crackle..." Where the white light passed by, space split apart.

Linley didn't dodge at all, directly sending a palm to smash towards that light. "BANG!" Linley just felt his right hand completely go numb. His draconic scales split apart, and fresh blood began to leak out. That white light, however, was completely destroyed as well.

Despite this, Linley didn't slow down.

"Linley, you can't kill me." Emanuel was growing frantic now, but within that Gravitational Space, his speed was far inferior to Linley's.

"Die, then." Linley came for him.

"STAY YOUR HAND!" A furious roar sounded out. Linley felt as though this roar bored directly through his mind, causing his head to grow slightly dizzy. Linley couldn't help but pay attention to the air above him. And in the air above...

A man dressed in an azure robe with many embroidered patterns was descending, his long azure hair fluttering in the wind.

His gaze was like thunder, and he was staring directly downwards.

"Patriarch!" Emanuel was overjoyed. He wouldn't have to die.

"Patriarch!" Those Elders, upon seeing this person, all immediately bowed respectfully.

"Patriarch!" Those thousands of patrolling warriors all immediately bowed in respect as well.

Linley's heart trembled. "Patriarch?" However, seeing that Emanuel was not too far away, and how he had already relaxed, the murderous intent emerged once more in Linley's heart. "This Emanuel cannot be spared!" With a 'swish', Linley charged over.

Emanuel's face changed dramatically. "Linley, you..." He never imagined that Linley would dare disobey the orders of the Patriarch.

What he didn't realize was...

Linley had joined the Azure Dragon clan less than a century ago, and so he didn't have a clear idea of what the Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan represented, nor did he feel much fear towards the man. He wasn't like Elder Emanuel and the other Elders. In their eyes, the Patriarch was an invincible expert.

The commands of the Patriarch were not to be disobeyed.

Linley's right draconic claw landed mercilessly towards Emanuel, and within the range of that gravitational pull, Emanuel couldn't dodge at all.

"CLANG!" Suddenly, another draconic claw appeared, clashing directly with Linley's scale-covered right hand. Linley just felt his entire right arm tremble violently, and his fingers immediately lost all feeling. That draconic claw, with a flipping movement, trapped Linley's own right hand.

Linley raised his hand to look. It was the awe-inspiring Patriarch!

"Wasn't he over there just now? How could he be so fast?" Linley didn't dare believe that the Patriarch's speed could be so incredibly fast.

"I told you to stay your hand, and yet you still attack? What audacity!" The Patriarch's gaze was like ice as he stared at Linley. The Patriarch's draconic scale covered right hand grabbed Linley, and Linley actually had the feeling that wasn't able to resist at all.

This was the first time...

The first time Linley had encountered a person whose body and physical strength completely, utterly outclassed his own!

The number one expert of the Azure Dragon clan...the Patriarch, 'Gislason Redding'!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 17, Prestige

Everyone in Death Valley was utterly silent. The prestige and aura emanating from the Patriarch, Gislason, caused everyone present to feel pressure.

“What tremendous strength.” Linley’s right hand was numb and trembling slightly. He was like a little chick who had been seized by a great eagle, completely unable to fight back. In fact, the arm which the Patriarch had seized was actually slightly throbbing with pain. The power of this Patriarch was tremendous!

“Patriarch, this Elder Emanuel challenged me to a life-and-death duel. The Assembly of Elders approved it.” Linley said in a neither hostile nor submissive manner.

“The Assembly of Elders approved it?” The Patriarch, Gislason, glanced sideways at the distant elders, none of whom dared to make a sound. In their hearts, they felt misery, especially those three who had approved this application. How could any of them have known that Linley was so strong?

“So what if they approved it? Didn’t you hear my order just now?” Gislason stared fiercely at Linley.

Linley was stunned.

Emanuel also said, “Linley, in our Azure Dragon clan, nobody can disobey the commands of the Patriarch. What the Assembly of Elders has approved, the Patriarch can, with a word, forbid. You actually dared to disobey!”

From the corner of his eyes, Linley noticed the look on the faces of those distant Elders, then glanced at the look on Emanuel’s face. He couldn’t help but sigh to himself. “It seems within the Azure Dragon clan, the power of this Patriarch is extremely high, vastly outstripping that of the Assembly of Elders.”

When a person’s power reached a certain level, an entire clan would easily become a place where his word alone was supreme!

In the Azure Dragon clan, the word of Gislason reigned supreme!

“Patriarch, I’ve arrived in the Azure Dragon clan less than a century ago. There are many things regarding the clan which I am not aware of.” Linley said directly.

“Oh. Less than a century.” The Patriarch, Gislason, frowned.

“Linley, you dared to disobey the orders of the Patriarch. This has nothing to do with how long you have been in the Azure Dragon clan. The commands of the Patriarch are not to be disobeyed...you ignored the order of the Patriarch, which means you have no respect for him.” Emanuel angrily barked.

After saying these things, Emanuel didn’t continue to speak. He knew that disrespecting the Patriarch was a tremendous, grave sin.

Linley, hearing this, couldn’t help but feel his anger surge yet again.

“Whoosh!” A flickering blur.

“WHAP!” A palm slapped heavily against Emanuel’s face, and Emanuel was hit so hard that his entire body was twisted. Blood flew everywhere as Emanuel fell to the ground, and then, terrified and confused, looked at the Patriarch, Gislason. He didn’t understand why the Patriarch had struck him!

“Shut your mouth!”

Gislason stared at him coldly. “You, a venerable Elder, are actually still not aware of the mistake you have made? Today, even if he killed you, you would have no one to blame but yourself. I haven’t even punished you yet, and yet you are here babbling. Do you really think I’m afraid to kill you?”

Emanuel shuddered, not daring to say another word.

Linley couldn’t help but be surprised. “It seems as though this Patriarch isn’t just one-sidedly supporting this Emanuel. Given this Patriarch’s temper, it seems as though no matter who you are, you’d best not offend him.” Linley wasn’t a rash person either.

This was the only son of their ancestor, the Azure Dragon. The man who had been the Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan for countless years! The person in the clan whose word was law, the leader of the entire Four Divine Beasts clan!

How could authority like his be violated?

Gislason glanced sideways at Linley and Emanuel, then at the distant group of Elders. He couldn’t help but let out a cold snort. “The two of you, and you Elders. Follow me!” As he spoke, Gislason flew into the air.

“Kid, you are in for it.” Emanuel glanced at Linley. “The Patriarch hates it when people challenge his authority.” And then, he flew into the air as well.

Linley also glanced into the distance. Those Elders all followed behind, not one of them daring to make any sound.

“I wonder what type of person this Patriarch is.” Linley had no choice but to fly along as well. In that short exchange he had just had, he was able to tell that the power of the Patriarch far outstripped his own. For the Patriarch to kill him definitely wouldn’t be difficult.

Right now, he was here in the Skyrite Mountains along with all of his friends and family. It was best just to swallow his anger at present.

Linley turned to glance at Delia, Bebe, Tarosse, and the others, all of whom were back at Death Valley staring at him, their eyes filled with worry.

“Boss, be careful. Don’t anger that Patriarch. I have the feeling he’s not a good person to piss off.” Bebe sent through their spiritual link worriedly. “That Patriarch’s gaze caused even me to feel terror. Honestly.”

“I know. Don’t worry. You all go back for now.” Linley sent back spiritually.

At the same time, Linley also followed Emanuel and the Patriarch together. Gislason himself flew up in front by himself, not saying a single word, while the Elders and Linley also followed without making a single sound, feeling quite pressured.

“Linley, in a while, when chatting with the Patriarch, be careful of what you say. Don’t make the Patriarch angry.” The handsome youth, ‘Elder Garvey’, drew near to Linley and sent through divine sense.

“Thank you.” Linley sent back through divine sense.

“Don’t think this is a small matter. Let me tell you this. The Patriarch hates it when clansmen kill each other. In addition, he will not accept anyone disobeying him. In the entire clan, only the Grand Elder is able to sway the Patriarch.” Garvey said solemnly. “If you disobey his will just a single time further, even if the Grand Elder comes, she won’t be able to rescue you.”

Linley nodded gratefully.

“Elder Garvey, how do you think the Patriarch will deal with me?” Linley wasn’t confident. After all, he had never met or spoken to this Patriarch. Although in this short period of time, he was able to tell that the Patriarch was extremely domineering, he didn’t know anything else.

“Given that our clan is currently in a state of crisis, I expect that the Patriarch probably won’t kill you. He’ll just punish you.” Garvey sent back.

Linley felt slightly more settled.

Moments later, the Patriarch Gislason as well as the various Elders reached the top of the Azure Dragon clan’s ‘Dragon Avenue’, where a large castle stood. This ancient castle’s doors were open, and the guards all bowed respectfully.

This group, with the Patriarch leading them, slipped into the castle.

The main hall of the castle. The Patriarch sat high up above them on the throne, while the Elders and Linley stood beneath the throne.

“He’s like an emperor meeting with his subjects.” Linley, seeing this, became all the more aware of the status the Patriarch had in the clan. In some clans, the elders of the clan would have tremendous power. But in the Azure Dragon clan, it was completely different.

“Hmph!” The Patriarch, Gislason, stared downwards. He couldn’t help but let out a cold, icy snort. “I said long ago that given the crisis our clan is in, what we need to do is work to eradicate those eight great clans. Our clansmen should not be committing fratricide against each other. Even if you are to die, you should die in battle against the eight great clans!”

“For two of the clan’s experts who are at the Seven Star Fiend level to battle each other requires the agreement of the entire Assembly of Elders, or my agreement, before the application can be approved. What? Has the entire Assembly of Elders agreed to their life-and-death duel?” Gislason said furiously.

Immediately, a silver-haired elder who was standing in the front said clearly, “Father, this Linley had hid his power quite deeply. We had all previously viewed him as being just a God. Thus…”

To the clan, a God was nothing much.

But Seven Star Fiends were precious to the clan. Permitting two Seven Star Fiends to kill each other was something which the clan definitely would not do. If they wanted to engage in a life-and-death duel, they had to get permission from either the Patriarch or the entire Assembly of Elders.

This was also the primary reason why Gislason was so enraged when he saw Linley and Emanuel engaged in a life-and-death duel.

If one was to die, one had to die in a worthwhile manner, in battle against the eight great clans.

“Enough.” Gislason said coldly.

The Elder immediately fell silent. Although he was an Elder, he was also Gislason's son. So what if a father rebuked his son! In the Azure Dragon clan, the two longest living members were Gislason and his sister. The others were all junior to them.

This was also one of the reasons why Gislason's word was law.

"This doesn't need to be discussed any further." Gislason said calmly. "In the past, you weren't aware of Linley's power. Since it is now obvious that Linley has the power of a Seven Star Fiend, then this life-and-death duel can no longer proceed."

"Linley. Emanuel. Do you have any objections?" Gislason swept the two with his gaze.

"No objections." Emanuel hurriedly said.

"No objections." Linley said as well.

"Very good." Gislason continued to stare at the two of them. "Emanuel, you previously believed Linley was just an ordinary God. I want to know, why would you, an Elder, engage in a life-and-death duel with a God? Tell me the reason!"

Linley glanced sideways at Emanuel. The reason Emanuel wanted to kill him was for his Sovereign artifact. Would Emanuel dare admit it now?

Emanuel began to sweat, large beads appearing on his forehead. "Patriarch, this Linley didn't show me any respect at all. He went too far. In my anger, I thus..."

"Hmph." An icy snort shook the entire palace.

Emanuel's body couldn't help but tremble.

"You dare to lie to my face?" Gislason chuckled. "I gave you a chance to tell the truth, but you didn't take it."

Emanuel's face instantly turned white.

"I won't kill you." Gislason stared coldly at him. "The Grand Elder is currently in need of assistances. Starting tomorrow, go to the Grand Elder's side. As for what the Grand Elder will arrange for you to do, that's for her to decide."

Emanuel's body trembled, his heart filled with terror.

"Yes, Patriarch." Emanuel still replied.

"Now, scram. Go stand over there." Gislason snapped with disgust. Emanuel immediately retreated to one side of the main hall. Gislason's gaze now turned to Linley. The corner of his lips curved upwards slightly. "Linley, right?"

"Yes, Patriarch." Linley replied.

"Over all these years, those people who dared to directly ignore my orders...do you know what happened to them?" Gislason said.

Linley trembled slightly. He couldn't help but have a bad feeling. Could it be that this Gislason was going to kill him? However, Linley still spoke out. "Patriarch, it was less than a century ago that I returned to the Azure Dragon clan. I still know very few things regarding our Azure Dragon clan."

Gislason's face instantly sank down. "You really know how to equivocate."

Linley suddenly found, to his amazement, that Gislason suddenly moved forward from the throne, walking directly in front of him. After inspecting Linley carefully, he immediately turned and walked to a side room by the side of the main hall. "Linley, follow me. Everyone else, wait here!"

"Yes, Patriarch." Linley immediately followed.

After the Patriarch and Linley left, the other Elders finally dared to let out sighs of relief.

"The Patriarch wants to speak privately with Linley. What do you think will happen? A private meeting with the Patriarch is definitely nothing good." Immediately, an Elder spoke out with concern. The members of the Azure Dragon clan all held the Patriarch in dread and awe.

"If this were the past, Father would kill Linley." The silver-haired Elder said. "However, at present, Father probably will not kill him. However, although he won't kill him, his punishment definitely won't be a light one. It won't be any lighter than the punishment he gave Emanuel."

Immediately, the other Elders looked towards Emanuel.

"Emanuel, by the side of the Grand Elder, you'll have a chance to truly serve the clan." Someone laughed.

"Hmph." Emanuel just let out a low snort.

"Emanuel, tell the truth. What's the real reason why you insisted on killing Linley?" The Elders began to ask. Nobody believed that just because of a simple offense, Emanuel would have gone so wild.

"Stop asking." Suddenly, a golden-haired Elder barked out.

"Father." Emanuel looked towards the golden-haired elder. This golden-haired elder was a third generation expert of the Azure Dragon clan, and a figure who commanded great respect amongst the Elders. After all, his mother was the 'Grand Elder'.

"Tell me, what's this about?" The golden-haired elder sent through divine sense.

Emanuel knew that his chance to gain the Coiling Dragon ring was most likely lost. If he couldn't gain it, he couldn't let an outsider gain it either. Thus, he sent back through divine sense, "Father, that Linley is carrying a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, the 'Azure Dragon ring' of our ancestor."

The golden-haired Elder was instantly stunned.

"What did you say?" The golden-haired Elder didn't dare to believe it.

"It's true. It is the Azure Dragon ring. There's no mistaking it. That Linley truly is just a God. The reason he was able to withstand a Highgod soul attack was because of that Azure Dragon ring." Emanuel hurriedly sent through divine sense.

Many thoughts immediately flashed through the mind of the golden-haired elder.

Emanuel looked at his father. "The Azure Dragon ring won't end up in my hands. However, Father, as long as you strive to seize that Azure Dragon ring, it shouldn't be too hard for you."

"Kid, you should've told me sooner." The golden-haired elder glanced at him. "But telling me now isn't too late either."

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 18,

‘Punishment’

In the quiet side room, Gislason was seated on a chair, while Linley was standing off to one side. Gislason just looked at Linley, looked at him quietly, not saying a word. The pressure that filled this side room caused Linley to unconsciously feel fear.

“The Patriarch summoned me here, but he isn’t saying anything. What is he going to do?” Linley was panicking.

After standing in the side room for a long time, Linley finally couldn’t resist from speaking out. “Patriarch...”

Gislason, startled out of his pondering, looked at Linley. He let out a low sigh, that icy, tyrannical aura that had been present in the main palace hall now gone from his face. The only thing left was grief. Gislason sighed, “Linley, where are you from?”

“From another plane.” Linley said.

“The Yulan Plane, right?” Gislason said casually.

Linley was startled. How did this Gislason know? Could it be that he had already investigated Linley’s background?

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“The Yulan Plane. It really is.” Gislason raised his head. Silently, a tear dripped down his face, landing on the ground. “Drip!” As it hit the ground, the teardrop broke apart.

“The Patriarch...is crying?” Linley was completely stunned.

The leader of the Azure Dragon clan, this ultimate expert, Gislason...was crying? Linley could even understand it if Gislason wanted to kill him, but why had Gislason just shed a tear?

“Let me take a look at your Azure Dragon ring. There’s no need to remove the blood binding.” Gislason let out a low sigh.

“Azure Dragon ring?” Linley stared in astonishment at Gislason. After the Emanuel affair, he had already changed the appearance of the Coiling Dragon ring. From outside appearances, there was no way anyone could tell that his ring was a Sovereign artifact.

Gislason’s forehead furrowed. Raising his head up, he looked at Linley. “I told you to give me your Azure Dragon ring and let me take a look at it. Don’t worry. I’m not being greedy for your Azure Dragon ring. I have my own!” As he spoke, Gislason stretched out his right hand.

Linley looked at it. Indeed, on his right hand, there was a ring that was completely identical to the Coiling Dragon ring. Only, the color was azure.

“Originally, Father refined two soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts, one for himself to use, and another which he gave me.” Gislason said softly. Linley, astonished, stared at the ring on the Patriarch’s hand.

That Azure Dragon ring was a complete, undamaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

“Patriarch, go ahead and look.” Linley immediately tossed over his Coiling Dragon ring.

Gislason’s eyes lit up, and he immediately accepted the Coiling Dragon ring. Even the right hand which he used to hold this ring began to tremble slightly, and faint tears appeared in his eyes. “Father! Father!!!” Gislason stared at this Coiling Dragon ring as though it were an unsurpassingly holy object.

“This is the material it was made of. Right...” Gislason stroked it, his eyes closed.

Linley had never been certain as to what the Coiling Dragon ring was made of. In the Yulan Plane, Linley didn’t know, and even now, he still didn’t know.

“This Sovereign artifact is damaged, right?” Gislason opened his eyes, then tossed the Coiling Dragon ring back to Linley.

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“What’s the situation on the damage?” Gislason asked.

“The soul-protecting Sovereign artifact appears as a membrane. On the surface of it, there is a small hole. Just a single hole. The other parts of it are completely undamaged.” Linley didn’t lie.

“A single small hole?”

Gislason frowned. “Capable of killing my father and the rest of the four Sovereigns, and also break through a Sovereign artifact...just a small hole?” Gislason’s mind raced through many possibilities. Just from the hole in the Sovereign artifact, Gislason had already come to a conclusion regarding the killer.

“It was definitely one of those people!”

As soon as Gislason thought of who the enemy was, he felt helpless. “The enemy definitely doesn’t care at all about little people like us. Even the most powerful of Highgods is nothing in front of a Sovereign.” Gislason already stood at the very precipice of Highgods.

Unfortunately...

Compared to a Sovereign, he didn’t have any ability to fight back at all. The enemy was able to kill four great Sovereigns. What was a few Highgods?

“Patriarch, is the clan going to confiscate my ring?” Linley asked, worried.

Gislason glanced at him, then said, “Since Father chose you to be the inheritor of this Azure Dragon ring, then you being in possession of this Azure Dragon ring is Father’s will. Father’s will is something which nobody, no matter who they are, is qualified to change!”

Linley’s heart calmed down.

As Gislason looked at Linley, he couldn’t help but think of his father. In the past, their ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’, had been very caring towards his son and daughter. As for the grandsons and future generations of the clan, the Azure Dragon hadn’t cared too much.

“Patriarch, I am puzzled about one thing.” Linley couldn’t help but ask.

Linley was extremely puzzled as to how this Gislason had recognized the 'Azure Dragon ring'. He had changed the appearance of his Coiling Dragon ring, and it didn't emit any aura at all. How could Gislason tell just by looking at it that this Coiling Dragon ring was special?

Could it be the material?

But from the outside, unless one looked at it closely, there was no way to discover anything unusual about the material.

"Puzzled? Speak." Gislason revealed a rare hint of a smile.

"Patriarch, how did you discover that my ring is the Azure Dragon ring? I don't understand." Linley said hurriedly.

"Haha..." Gislason began to laugh. "As a Sovereign artifact, once its aura is hidden, there's no way one can recognize it from the surface. You've also changed the appearance of the ring. How could I tell, just by looking at it?"

Linley was mystified. "Patriarch, then why did you say that I definitely had the Azure Dragon ring?"

"Because of your body." Gislason laughed.

"Body?" Linley was puzzled.

"Your body is extremely powerful. Even in our Azure Dragon clan, your body's power should rank as the fourth most powerful." Gislason said. "Even the third and fourth generation members cannot compare to you in terms of body strength."

If a person's body was powerful, that meant they had a Sovereign artifact?

Linley still didn't understand. However, he was indeed proud of how powerful his body was.

"Is the power of your body related to the absorption of a drop of water-type Sovereign's Might?" Gislason asked.

Linley, rather surprised, nodded. "It is."

"Linley, think about it. The ancestor of our Azure Dragon clan was a Sovereign. How could our clan possibly be lacking in water-type Sovereign's Might?" Gislason asked him.

Linley couldn't help but nod. Sovereign's Might, to Sovereign's, was like divine power to Deities. Naturally, it wouldn't be too precious. However, this drop of liquid Sovereign's Might still had to be formed through the compression of quite a bit of gaseous divine Sovereign power.

Gislason continued, "Every single Elder of the clan is in possession of a drop of water-type Sovereign's Might! But why is it that virtually none of them have bodies as strong as yours?"

Linley was immediately stumped.

Right.

These Elders were all descendants of the Azure Dragon clan as well, and they all had the lineage of the Azure Dragon. They also all had Sovereign's Might. Why hadn't their bodies become as powerful as Linley's?

Gislason sighed. "Using Sovereign's Might to strengthen and transform the body...this was the ultimate technique which Father developed only after he himself became a Sovereign."

"Father is a Sovereign, but he didn't create a Sovereign artifact level armor. This was because the draconic scales of his body, in defensive power, were already comparable to Sovereign artifacts." Gislason said with great pride.

Linley couldn't help but be stunned.

Sovereign artifacts, the most terrifyingly powerful artifacts of legends.

But their ancestor, the 'Azure Dragon', actually was so powerful that his body was like a Sovereign artifact.

"To strengthen one's body to the level of our ancestor, there was only one way. This way, however, had three preconditions!" Gislason said. "First, you have to be a member of the Azure Dragon clan. Second, you have to have the most precious 'blood essence' of our ancestor himself. Third, you have to have Sovereign's Might."

"Blood essence?" Linley was surprised.

"Right. And it must be 'blood essence' from after our ancestor became a Sovereign." Gislason sighed. "This 'blood essence' is the distilled essence of his blood. Only descendants of the Azure Dragon clan are capable of absorbing this distilled blood essence. Only after absorbing it can one become like the ancestor, to naturally absorb Sovereign's Might and strengthen one's body."

"The amount of 'blood essence' you absorb also determines how much Sovereign's Might you can absorb." Gislason said.

Linley thought back to that golden drop of blood. "I didn't realize that was actually the blood essence of my ancestor, the distilled essence of his blood!"

"Your body is so powerful, you definitely absorbed a drop of distilled blood essence. However, where did that drop you absorbed come from?" Gislason continued, "When our ancestor created those Sovereign artifacts, in order to make the Sovereign artifacts possess semi-sentience, he dripped a single drop of his blood essence into them."

"Thus, I was certain that you had acquired a Sovereign artifact. Aside from this, there was no other possible explanation." Gislason said.

Linley now understood.

"Our ancestor had two Sovereign artifacts. One was a weapon-type Sovereign artifact, while the other was a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Because I already know where the weapon-type Sovereign artifact is, thus I was certain that the Sovereign artifact you were carrying could only possibly be that soul-protecting Sovereign artifact...the Azure Dragon ring."

Hearing these words, the many questions which had puzzled Linley over these years were finally answered.

"No wonder I was unable to absorb the other two drops of Sovereign's Might." Linley said to himself. He had absorbed a single drop of that blood essence, and so he was only able to withstand a single physical transformation from Sovereign's Might.

"Alright. Let's go out now." Gislason said.

"Yes, Patriarch." Linley, in his heart, didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

So the reason Gislason had summoned him for a private meeting was because he wanted to look at the Coiling Dragon ring and ask about the damage it had sustained. As for punishment? Gislason hadn't said a single word. But what Linley himself didn't understand was...

When Gislason had seen him, he had thought of his father, the 'Azure Dragon'. Naturally, he wouldn't punish Linley much.

In the main hall.

"He's coming. The Patriarch is coming." These Elders all immediately stopped talking and rose to their feet with respect. Gislason's face returned to its usual icy expression, and he walked to the throne at the front of the palace and sat down. As for Linley, he stood alongside with the Elders.

Linley glanced sideways at Emanuel, who just sneered coldly at him.

"This Emanuel definitely has some bad ideas. If I find an opportunity, I have to kill him." Linley had encountered countless waves and storms in his life. Naturally, he could determine that between himself and Emanuel, the conflict was now at a level where it would only end with one party's death.

"I already know clearly what has happened." Patriarch Gislason swept his gaze across the people below.

Emanuel and the golden-haired Elder, hearing this, couldn't help but be shocked.

"Linley disobeyed my orders. This was a pardonable misunderstanding. However, it can be considered that I have already punished him." Gislason continued. Linley was stunned. Punished? It seemed as though although they had chatted for quite a bit, he hadn't been punished at all.

"However, everyone is now also aware of Linley's power. According to the rules of the clan, once a clansman has reached the Seven Star Fiend level of power, he will be bestowed the position of Elder." Gislason continued.

Emanuel's eyes immediately turned red.

The many Elders in the hall couldn't help but turn to look at Linley.

"Elder?" Linley had been pondering about Gislason lying about punishing him, but in the blink of an eye, the 'punishment' had indeed come.

The Patriarch, 'Gislason', waved his hand, and instantly, a neatly folded cape as well as a set of azure armor, along with quite a few scattered objections such as medallions, drifted towards Linley. Linley was stunned, but he immediately bowed respectfully. "Thank you, Patriarch."

Linley immediately accepted those items.

"From today onwards, Linley is the thirty sixth Elder in the Assembly of Elders!" Gislason announced.

Quite a few Elders nodded in a friendly manner towards Linley.

Elder Garvey immediately sent through divine sense, "Linley, congratulations. However, you'd best immediately put on those clothes on immediately. Generally speaking, Elders are required to wear their uniform within the clan. But of course, your own residence is an exception."

Linley immediately bound it all with blood. Linley's body flashed, and that azure armor with the complicated golden embroidered suddenly appeared on Linley's body, while that gleaming, multicolored cape also appeared on his back.

After having put the uniform on, he now appeared identical in outfit to the other people in the main hall.

“Alright. Everyone can leave now.” Gislason said.

“Yes, Patriarch.”

The group of Elders all bowed, then left.

“Forhan [Fo’er’han], Emanuel, you two, father and son, stay behind!” Gislason suddenly said. Immediately, Emanuel and that golden-haired Elder looked at each other, halting their steps. As for Linley and the rest, they all flew out.

Linley bid farewell to each of the Elders, then immediately flew towards the gorge where he lived.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 19, Elder

Dragon Avenue. Linley was flying at high speed through the curving path.

“Previously, because of the life-and-death duel, I angered the Patriarch. As I left with him, I was worrying if I would face a dangerous situation. But who would have imagined that not only would I not be punished, in the blink of an eye, I would become an Elder of the clan!” Linley looked at the gold-patterned azure armor he was wearing, and couldn’t help but laugh.

“The changes in the world are quite marvelous indeed.” Linley sighed.

“Elder!” Many of the patrolling soldiers on Dragon Avenue, upon seeing Linley, immediately saluted respectfully.

Linley glanced at these patrolling soldiers and nodded slightly.

Linley flew past the many saluting patrolling warriors.

Watching Linley fly past, one patrolling warrior frowned. “This Elder... seems to be that Linley who took part in the life-and-death duel. Captain, you went as well. That was Linley, wasn’t it?”

“I didn’t see too clearly. It did seem to be Linley.” The captain of the squad said.

“It was Linley. I saw him clearly.”

“What, that Linley, the one who took part in the life-and-death duel, became an Elder?” Quite a few patrolling warriors who hadn’t watched the life-and-death duel were puzzled.

“Is it strange that he became an Elder? If it hadn’t been that the Patriarch had hurried over in time, Elder Emanuel would have been killed. That Lord Linley definitely has the power of a Seven Star Fiend!”

After all, thousands of patrolling warriors had watched that duel. Thus, as Linley flew along Dragon Avenue, he was recognized by quite a few people. Soon, the news that Linley had become an Elder was spread quite quickly amongst those patrolling warriors.

“Here we are.” Linley looked at the gorge in front of him. His body transformed into a streak, and he charged straight into it.

Linley flew directly towards the Yulan branch. In mid-air, Linley saw that at the door to his residence, a group of people were gathered. Baruch, Tarosse, Olivier, and tens of others were there.

“I hope Linley is fine.” Hazard sighed softly. “It’s so rare for our Yulan branch to produce an expert like him. If he is...ugh!” Unconsciously, everyone in the Yulan branch had considered Linley as the ‘flagbearer’ for their branch.

How could their flagbearer be allowed to fall?

“Who knows how the Patriarch will punish Linley.” Cesar said with concern as well.

“From what I saw at Death Valley, the Patriarch is very severe.” Olivier said with a frown.

“Don’t worry. The Patriarch won’t kill him, at least.” Baruch said. He knew very well the danger which the Four Divine Beasts clan was currently in. At a time like this, the Patriarch wouldn’t be willing to kill any of their experts.

Delia just continued to frown, quietly waiting.

“The Boss is coming.” Bebe suddenly said while raising his head to look upwards.

“Linley is coming?” The group of people immediately followed Bebe’s gaze, staring into the sky. From above that faint fog, a human figure was descending at high speed. Baruch and the others only saw a blurry, indistinct multicolored light.

The figure landed. It was Linley!

Baruch, Tarosse, and the others all stared at Linley, slack-jawed.

Linley’s entire body was clad in azure armor, which in turn was covered with complicated golden embroidery patterns, giving off an ancient, noble aura. That cape which Linley wore over his shoulders, in peculiar, had unfathomably mysterious runes atop it and had all colors of light flowing atop it.

It was the uniform of an Elder!

“Lin...Linley?” Baruch, Ryan, Dylin, and the others all stared in astonishment at Linley.

“Clan leader.” Linley laughed as he looked at everyone.

“Linley, you’ve become an Elder?” Hazard’s eyes were bulging.

In the Azure Dragon clan, Elders were definitely the true, high level members of the clan. Every single Elder was a Seven Star Fiend, capable of making the countless members of their clan venerate and worship them. They all knew that Linley’s power was formidable, but who would have imagined...

That Linley would become an Elder!

“Everyone, don’t stand outside. Let’s talk inside.” Linley laughed as he spoke.

“Right. All into the living room.” Baruch came to his senses and said hurriedly, “Linley, when you left with the Patriarch and the Elders, what exactly happened? You have to explain clearly to us. We’ve been puzzled for so long.”

“Clan leader...” Linley was just about to speak.

“You can just address me as Baruch.” Baruch looked at the Elder’s uniform which Linley was wearing. “Linley, you are an Elder now. There’s only one person whom you can now address as clan leader or Patriarch.”

Linley understood what Baruch meant, and he laughed. “Within the gorge, I’ll still address you as clan leader.”

Baruch, seeing the look on Linley’s face, knew that arguing would be pointless. All he could do was assent.

All the important members of the Yulan branch gathered around. They listened to Linley explain, and Linley naturally just gave a brief explanation, skipping over some secrets. While hearing what had happened, everyone celebrated on behalf of Linley, while at the same time feeling proud of him.

Linley, the thirty sixth Elder of the Assembly of Elders!

The Yulan branch's status in the Azure Dragon clan was very low. However, now that their branch had produced an Elder, the status of the Yulan branch had just completely changed. After all, the entire clan only had so many Elders.

For their branch to have an Elder meant that their clansmen of their branch would be more confident while in the Skyrise Mountains.

The next morning. Dawn. Linley's room.

"Delia, I had been planning to quietly train until I became a Highgod, but...I'm sorry. Now that I'm an Elder, most likely, our peaceful life won't last for much longer." Linley held Delia and said apologetically.

Delia laughed, then raised her head to look at Linley. "You don't have to say sorry."

"Linley!" A voice rang out in Linley's mind.

Linley was startled. He smiled apologetically towards Delia. "I didn't expect it would come so fast. I just became an Elder yesterday, but today, someone has already come looking for me."

"Go, then." Delia said.

Linley nodded slightly, then immediately transformed into a blur, flying out of the room and into the skies above the gorge. A handsome youth dressed in Elder's garb was standing there in mid-air. It was Elder Garvey.

"Linley." Garvey smiled as he spoke.

"Garvey, is there something you need?" Linley asked.

"Yesterday, you became an Elder. I imagine you don't know anything about the powers and responsibilities of Elders." Garvey laughed calmly. "The clan leader thus ordered me to come and give you a detailed explanation."

Linley's eyes lit up. "Thank you."

"Are you going to make me just stand here as I talk?" Garvey laughed.

Linley glanced around. At present, he and Garvey were standing in mid-air above the gorge. This was indeed a rather poor way to treat a guest. He immediately laughed. "Garvey, let's go. Come to my residence. We'll have a good chat." As he spoke, Linley and Garvey, the two Elders, flew directly downwards.

At this time, a human figure descended towards the gorge. It was the person whom Linley had met on his first day in the Skyrise Mountains, the person who wanted to embarrass the Yulan branch: Asru.

"These past few days have been so boring. Those eight great clans are always vigilantly watching our Four Divine Beasts clan, and when we patrolling warriors are off duty, we still can't leave. We have to stay in the mountains."

“Fortunately, in half a month, it’ll be time for my next thousand-year assignment. It’ll be my turn to go patrol. Patrolling is better than always being here in this gorge.” Asru was in an excellent mood. But suddenly, Asru turned his head to stare into the distance. Two blurry figures had suddenly flickered and vanished.

“Eh? Elders?” Asru was shocked. “Two Elders. Why did they come to an out-of-the-way place like our gorge?”

This gorge was a fairly remote place within the Azure Dragon clan’s territory. How could an Elder come here, normally?

“One of those two Elders seems so familiar from the back...” Asru frowned. Because half of the great valley was covered by fog, and given that the two Elders moved too quickly, Asru hadn’t seen them clearly. “That one...seems a bit similar to Linley!”

But then, Asru laughed. “How is that possible? Linley belongs to the Yulan branch. Although his power is excellent, how can he compare to an Elder, much less become one. That bit of ability he has is only enough to let him show off here in our gorge.”

Asru laughed disdainfully, then flew out of the gorge.

Within the living room. Linley and Garvey were chatting with each other.

As they chatted, Linley began to get a clearer and clearer picture of many of the clan’s affairs. He couldn’t help but sigh in his heart. “The power of the Assembly of Elders truly is enormous. In the entire Azure Dragon clan, virtually all affairs are managed by the Elders. Although the Patriarch is powerful, he normally never takes part in matters.”

“Garvey, I’ve heard you say so many things. In the clan, the Elders really are responsible for quite a few things.” Linley laughed. “I wonder what I will be assigned to manage?”

“Don’t be impatient. Right now, all tasks within the clan already have supervisors handling them. There’s no lack or opening right now. Thus, for now, there’s nothing you have to do.” Garvey laughed. “Right now, you can simply enjoy the perks and powers of being an Elder without having to take on any responsibilities.”

“Your residence and some other things have already been arranged.” Garvey said. “Also, you can also now apply for your Yulan branch to be moved to a nicer place.”

“No need. I’m fine living here.” Linley frowned. “Garvey, from what you are saying, it seems that right now, I have nothing I have to do?” The clan was currently in a period of crisis. How could he be allowed to be so leisurely?

“Of course you have things to do. Only, it isn’t now. Wait for the Conclave of Elders!” Garvey said. “The Conclave of Elders is held once every thousand years, and during each Conclave, different assignments will be meted out to each Elder. As an Elder, by then, you’ll be assigned some tasks as well.”

Linley now understood.

“Thus, for now, continue enjoying your leisurely life. After the Conclave, you won’t be able to, even if you want to.” Garvey chuckled. “The sort of leisurely life you currently have is something which the other Elders all dream of but can’t have.”

Linley chuckled as well. “Oh, right. Garvey, how long will it be before the next Conclave of Elders?” Given that they met every thousand years, perhaps he would have centuries of leisurely time remaining.

“Fifteen days!” Garvey said.

“Fifteen days?” Linley was astonished.

A thousand years between Conclaves...but it just so happened that he was only fifteen days off from the next one?

“Right. That’s why I told you to treasure these leisurely days.” Garvey laughed as he stood up. “Alright, I need to go. When the Conclave of Elders begins, there will be someone who will come invite you to attend.”

Linley stood up as well, escorting Garvey as he left.

Within the gorge.

“That Linley of the Yulan branch, he became an Elder? Impossible!”

“It’s true. Those members of the Yulan branch said it so smugly. From the looks of it, it shouldn’t be false. But to tell the truth, the smugness which those Yulan branch members have right now is really irritating.”

“They’re just blowing hot air, I wager.”

The gorge was quickly filled with variations on this sort of conversation. The Yulan branch had hundreds of members. These clansmen, after knowing that Linley had become an Elder, immediately went to brag and show off in front of the other branches within the gorge.

All people care about face.

Deities were the same. Linley was able to become an Elder of the clan. The formerly perpetually-snubbed Yulan branch’s clansmen naturally wanted to show off for a bit.

Asru was walking towards his own residence. He was preparing for his rotation.

“Lord Asru, I heard that Linley became an Elder. Is it true?” Several people came to ask Asru. Asru was a Highgod, a formidable figure within the gorge.

“Don’t believe the braggadocio of those Yulan branch people. Linley, become an Elder? How could that be possible?” Asru snickered. “Also, just yesterday, I saw Linley. He was wearing ordinary clothes.” What he didn’t know was that in the gorge, Linley didn’t want to be wearing his Elder’s uniform all day long.

Suddenly, he stared. He suddenly remembered how some time ago, he had seen those two Elder’s figures from afar. A suspicion began to arise within his heart.

“I told you it was impossible.” Several people immediately began to speak out. “The Yulan branch, produce an Elder?”

“In a bit, I’ll rotate and be on duty. I’ll go ask the other warriors of the clan and I’ll know then.” Asru said. The gorge was simply too remote and its experts too few in number. It thus also took a long time for those of them within to learn news regarding the clan.

Those people all immediately and respectfully escorted Asru away.

But right at this moment...

“Elder Linley!” A bright voice suddenly echoed throughout the gorge. Immediately, within the gorge, every person, whether those in training or those chatting in pairs, or those who were flying in the air, was stunned.

Asru was stunned as well.

Immediately, a large number of figures flew towards the source of that voice. They all looked carefully...

Three black-robed figures were flying downwards respectfully, while Linley himself was flying out as well.

“Is the Conclave of Elders beginning?” Linley said.

“Yes, Elder.” The three black-robed men bowed.

“Let’s go, then.” Linley immediately flew in the air, and those three black-robed figures followed behind respectfully.

The many people in the gorge all stared, slack-jawed, at this scene. After seeing Linley dressed in an Elder’s uniform, with that flashing, gleaming cape, quite a few people were truly stunned.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 20,

Conclave of Elders

As he strode into the large hall, Linley swept it with his gaze. “Only twelve Elders have arrived?” The Azure Dragon clan had thirty six Elders. The other Elders in the hall, upon seeing Linley, all laughed while greeting him.

“Linley, sit over here.” Elder Garvey beckoned towards him.

Linley walked over and sat down by Garvey’s side.

This Conclave of Elders was held in a large hall, where a very large, dark red circular table was placed in the center, with a ring of chairs around the table. Linley swept it with his gaze and discovered: “Eh? Just sixteen chairs?”

The round table was very large, and there was more than enough space for forty chairs. But they had only sixteen chairs prepared.

“Garvey, there’s only sixteen chairs? Aren’t there supposed to be thirty six Elders?” Linley said softly.

“The Elders of Bloodbath Gorge do not attend.” Garvey explained.

Linley sighed to himself.

Bloodbath Gorge was the most central area of the entire Skyrite Mountains. It was also the place where the most powerful experts of the Azure Dragon clan, the Vermillion Bird clan, the White Tiger clan, and the Black Tortoise clan gathered. The Azure Dragon clan had twenty Elders stationed there.

“They won’t even attend the Conclave of Elders.” On the day that Linley had become an Elder, there had only been ten or so Elders present in the palace. Not a single one of the Elders who had been in the Bloodbath Gorge had come on that day either.

“The Elders at Bloodbath Gorge truly are risking their lives to battle for the clan.” Fifteen days ago, Linley had chatted with Garvey, and had discussed the responsibilities of Elders. At that time, Garvey had explained Bloodbath Gorge to him.

The eight great clans were always watching like rapacious tigers. The Four Divine Beasts clan were faced with great danger, and although they could hide in the Skyrite Mountains and live their lives there like turtles hiding in their shells...

Given the arrogance of the Four Divine Beasts clan, how could they possibly forever hide?

In addition, how could a large clan like theirs be perpetually cut off from the outside world? The Four Divine Beasts clan was connected to the outside world, but the people who connected them would be slaughtered and attacked by the eight great clans.

Would the Four Divine Beasts clan just quietly accept this?

Impossible!

The Four Divine Beasts clan would counter-attack, deliver vicious counter-blows to its enemies. Thus, the 'Bloodbath Gorge' was formed.

Bloodbath Gorge was where more than half of the experts of the Four Divine Beasts clan were gathered. The Azure Dragon clan had twenty-plus Elders, and of course, many Six Star Fiends were present as well. The requirement for one to enter Bloodbath Gorge was having the power of a Six Star Fiend.

Bloodbath Gorge. The gathering spot for the true elites of the Four Divine Beasts clan.

"The sixteen Elders are all present." A silver-haired Elder at the side of the round table said clearly. "This millennial Conclave of Elders, compared to the previous one, has an additional Elder present. This is something worthy of celebration."

Quite a few Elders grinned towards Linley.

Linley smiled back at each Elder in a show of friendliness, then glanced at the silver-haired Elder. Linley recognized this silver-haired Elder; he was the Second Elder of the Assembly of Elders, the son of Patriarch Gislason.

"With regards to everyone's assignments, let's set that aside for now." The Second Elder said solemnly. "Let me first explain to everyone the final battle results of our twenty-plus Elders of our Azure Dragon clan in Bloodbath Gorge, over the past millennium."

The faces of all the Elders turned solemn.

Bloodbath Gorge was a representation of the constant slaughter and warfare between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans.

"Our twenty-plus Elders of the Azure Dragon clan, in the past millennium, killed two enemy Seven Star Fiends and thirty six enemy Six Star Fiends! The number of other Highgods slain was not recorded." The Second Elder said forcefully.

So many?

Linley was secretly shocked. A thousand years, to Deities, was a very short period of time. But in a thousand short years, the Azure Dragon clan alone had killed two of the enemy's Seven Star Fiends, and thirty six of their Six Star Fiends.

How many enemies, then, had they killed in Bloodbath Gorge in total?

"The battle between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans truly is vicious." Linley said to himself.

"However, amongst our twenty-plus Elders, two of our Elders had their power dramatically reduced. They were the twenty first elder, 'Bangden' [Bang'dun], and the ninth Elder, 'Jeffs' [Ji'fo'si]. Elder Bangden's divine water clone was destroyed, and he no longer has the power of a Seven Star Fiend. He is currently in closed door training. As for Jeffs, his most powerful clone, the divine water clone, was destroyed as well. Luckily, however, his original body has never fused a divine spark. His original body thus once more fused with a divine water spark and his strength is thus returned...but from this day forward, he will most likely find it incredibly hard to advance a single step." The Second Elder said solemnly.

Immediately, the atmosphere in the hall became depressed.

"Two Elders. One no longer has the power of a Seven Star Fiend, while the other won't be able to advance at all in the future." Linley sighed to himself.

Linley knew what the rules of Bloodbath Gorge were. Those Elders who went out to do battle all left their weaker divine clones within Bloodbath Gorge. That way, even if they died in battle outside, they would still have a surviving divine clone.

Most likely, the enemies were doing the same.

Although they described the battle accomplishment as being the killing of two Seven Star Fiends, most likely, the divine clones of those two Seven Star Fiends had similarly been left back at their own bases.

“So for the original body not to fuse with a divine spark actually has a benefit like this.”

The Elder named ‘Jeffs’ had his most powerful divine water clone destroyed, but his original body had never fused with a divine spark, just like Linley. Thus, the Elder could use his original body to constantly fuse with water-type divine spark, all the way to becoming a Highgod.

This was because he already had the necessary insights into how to fuse the Laws of Water.

Thus, even if he became a Highgod through fusing a divine spark this time, his power wouldn’t be much different from in the past. Only...in the future, it would be very hard to advance further.

For example, if Linley’s divine earth clone was destroyed, he would become unable to use the Blackstone Space. However, Linley absolutely could let his original body continue to fuse a Demigod divine earth spark, a God divine earth spark, and a Highgod divine earth spark.

When the time came, Linley would still be able to execute the ‘Blackstone Space’. Only, he wouldn’t be able to make any further improvements.

“This time, aside from the two aforementioned Elders retiring from Bloodbath Gorge, there are also six Elders who have fought in Bloodbath Gorge for three thousand years already who will be retiring from Bloodbath Gorge! Thus, of our group of sixteen, there needs to be three who will fill the positions.”

Immediately, the Elders began to chat with each other through divine sense or ponder to themselves.

“Three Elders need to go to Bloodbath Gorge?” Linley also knew what going to Bloodbath Gorge represented.

“Because of the order of the Patriarch, punishing Emanuel to go serve with the Grand Elder, thus of the sixteen of us, Emanuel absolutely must go to Bloodbath Gorge. Two more must therefore be chosen out of the remaining fifteen.”

Linley couldn’t help but glance at the distant Emanuel out of the corner of his eyes. Emanuel remained silent, his face unchanging. Clearly, he already knew about this.

“Everyone, let’s choose two Elders to participate.” The Second Elder looked at everyone.

“Me!” A voice rang out from next to Linley. It was Elder Garvey. Elder Garvey laughed, “I wanted to go last time, but in terms of power, I was weaker than the others, so I was excluded. This time, it is my turn, right?”

“I nominate myself for a slot!” Immediately, another Elder spoke out. “The other Elders are battling for the clan outside, while I am remaining within the mountain. I feel miserable!”

“Garvey, it’s not your turn yet.” Yet another Elder spoke out. “I nominate myself.”

There were differences in power amongst the Elders as well. Garvey was clearly a fairly weak one. As for Bloodbath Gorge...the more powerful one was, the better it was when they entered.

“I’ll go as well.” Of the sixteen Elders, one of the three females, a jade-haired woman, laughed. “I truly wish to emulate the Grand Elder and to serve with her fighting for the clan.”

“For the sake of the clan, I’ll go as well.”

Linley, quite surprised, watched this scene. Originally, he thought that people would try to push it off onto others. However, Linley now discovered that eight of the sixteen were so valiant as to volunteer themselves, casting concerns regarding life and death to the side.

“Enough.” The golden-haired Elder shouted with a frown.

Linley turned to look. The golden-haired Elder was the Third Elder of the clan, the son of the Grand Elder. His name was Forhan. Forhan had another status...he was the father of Emanuel.

The golden-haired Elder, Forhan, said in a low voice. “I understand that everyone wishes to do battle for the sake of the clan. But in battle, the more powerful a person is, the better! Thus, in my heart, I have made two choices. The first is...”

Forhan suddenly pointed at Linley. “Elder Linley!”

Linley was slightly startled.

“Forhan, the question of who goes is a decision each person individually. It isn’t a matter for others to decide upon.” The Second Elder said.

Forhan furrowed his forehead stubbornly, then said in a clear voice, “As members of the clan, and with the clan facing danger, how can any of us ignore this? Look at the twenty Elders in Bloodbath Gorge. The vast majority of them have been battling there for thousands of years. According to the rules, every thousand years, they can retire. But they have not!”

“It is all for the sake of the clan! For the sake of making it so that our Azure Dragon clan’s prestige will not lower!”

Forhan looked at Linley. “The reason I choose Linley is because Linley’s Gravitational Space is very unusual, with the power of the gravity being miraculously great. Even Seven Star Fiends will generally have their speed greatly reduced within his Gravitational Space. When experts do battle, if Linley were to coordinate with several Elders, his power can definitely be unleashed to an extremely great effect.”

The Elders in the hall all immediately understood.

If Linley were to coordinate with several Elders while using his Gravitational Space, it would indeed be a tremendously effective supporting measure.

“Linley’s own power has been made clear to everyone as well. He vastly surpasses Emanuel. As I see it, just based on the power of his body, in our clan, Linley should rank number four! Even I feel I am inferior.” Forhan looked at Linley. “Linley, why don’t you speak for yourself. Are you willing to go?”

Linley laughed as he looked at Forhan. “Third Elder, I want to ask, who is the other person you have chosen?”

Forhan said solemnly, “The two people I selected...one is Linley, while the other is myself! I believe that in terms of strength, nobody here dares to say that they have definitely surpassed me. Last time, I didn’t go to Bloodbath Gorge...I’ve regretted it for a long time now. This time, I insist on going!”

Linley frowned.

The other person Forhan had chosen was actually Forhan himself?

“Linley?” The Second Elder looked at Linley. “What are your own thoughts?”

These Elders all admitted that in solo combat, some of them would dare say that they were not inferior to Linley. But in terms of group combat...none of them dared to say that they were superior to Linley. In group combat, the effect of Linley’s Blackstone Space truly was too good.

Once his Blackstone Space appeared, his own power would not be impacted, but the opponent’s speed would drastically drop. Even Seven Star Fiends, in a battle situation like this, would be defeated lopsidedly.

“I’ll go!” Linley nodded.

“Linley, not bad.” Forhan laughed as he spoke.

Linley just smiled back at him, while musing suspiciously to himself, “This Forhan seems to want to force me to go to Bloodbath Gorge. The way he acted just now...if I were to refuse to go, most likely the other Elders would look down upon me. Why does he want to force me to go? Can it have to do with his son, Emanuel?”

“Alright. The people have been chosen. Forhan, Emanuel, Linley, the three of you, after the conclusion of this Conclave, can go directly to Bloodbath Gorge.” The Second Elder looked at Linley and the other two. “The three of you, take care of yourselves.”

“Take care of yourselves.” These four words caused Linley to feel relieved of a sense of pressure he hadn’t realized he had been bearing.

“Bloodbath Gorge?” For some reason, Linley suddenly felt a hint of anticipation.

Ever since he had learned that the clan was in a crisis, Linley had known that one day, he too would battle on behalf of the clan. Only, he hadn’t imagined that the day would come so quickly.

Linley and the other two selectees were going to Bloodbath Gorge. Naturally, they wouldn’t be assigned any other activities. After the Conclave of Elders concluded, the other thirteen Elders all bade farewell to and sent off Linley, Forhan, and Emanuel.

“Linley, I truly want to go with you.” Garvey laughed. “Remember. Help kill a few extra enemies for me.”

Linley smiled and nodded.

Garvey’s face suddenly turned solemn. “Remember, you need to be careful. Protecting yourself is most important. Killing enemies is secondary to that.”

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“Enough. The three of you, you can head off. After arriving in Bloodbath Gorge, obey the commands of the Grand Elder.” The Second Elder said. Linley, Forhan, and Emanuel immediately made their farewells to each of the Elders, then immediately started to fly into the heart of the Skyrite Mountains.

The Skyrite Mountains were divided into four major areas, which each of the Four Divine Beasts clan were in control of.

In the core of the Skyrite Mountains, deep within a mountain valley, was Bloodbath Gorge. The place where the elites of the Four Divine Beasts clan gathered.

“The security here truly is tight.” Linley looked at the air above the gorge. There was an enormous number of roving warriors on patrol. Not just the azure armored warriors of the Azure Dragon clan, but also the golden armored warriors of the Vermilion Bird clan...

There were patrolling warriors from all four of the Four Divine Beasts clans. When these people saw Linley’s group of three fly over, they immediately saluted.

Linley, Emanuel, and Forhan flew directly into the depths of the gorge.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 21, The Grand Elder

Within the quiet, gloomy depths of Bloodbath Gorge.

Three human figures were descending at high speed landing on the ground.

Linley inspected his surroundings. Bloodbath Gorge was sparsely populated. As he stared straight forward, the only thing he could clearly see was an erect stone monument. As for the other buildings that could vaguely be seen through the mist, there was no way to see them clearly.

“There are so many soldiers of the Four Divine Beasts clan above the gorge, but so few people within Bloodbath Gorge itself. That makes sense. After all, everyone in here is at least a Six Star Fiend.” Linley continued to carefully inspect Bloodbath Gorge. As for Emanuel and Forhan, they strode forward with large steps.

Just as they walked away, Emanuel turned his head to look at Linley. “Linley, you’ve never been here before, right?”

“No, I’ve never been here before.” Linley didn’t have any goodwill towards Emanuel at all.

“Whoooooosh.” Suddenly, a cold wind began to howl. Linley felt his body turn cold, and he couldn’t help but be startled. “The wind is actually so icy, here in Bloodbath Gorge.”

Forhan couldn’t help but laugh. “Linley. Bloodbath Gorge is at the heart of the Skyfire Mountains, and is an extremely cold location. The cold wind within the gorge would cause any Demigods who came here to immediately be frozen. However, to you, Linley, this cold wind naturally doesn’t have much impact.”

“Elder Forhan, let’s continue to move forward.”

Linley couldn’t be bothered to chat too much with this father-son pair in front of him. He immediately advanced deeper into the gorge. There were quite a few round stones located within Bloodbath Gorge, as well as some wild grass. However, the center of it was a neatly paved stone road.

In front of Bloodbath Gorge, on one side of the stone road, there was a tall, massive stone monument.

The stone monument was covered with two dark red words that were written in cursive, like flying dragons or dancing phoenixes. The two words were, ‘Blood Bath’. Linley, upon seeing these two words, sensed a bloodthirsty, murderous aura emanate from it, and he couldn’t help but feel his own murderous desires rise in response.

“Forhan, Emanuel, so it’s actually the two of you this time. Haha...” A straightforward, clear laugh rang out. Linley turned to look, and saw an amiable, friendly-looking middle-aged man laugh as he walked over. This man had long sideburns, but they were very neatly trimmed, giving him quite a fresh, sharp appearance.

Linley looked at the newcomers.

“Arhaus [Er’hao’si]!” Forhan laughed and went to greet him, giving the man with the sideburns a big hug. “Long time no see.”

“It really has been quite some time since we’ve met.” This man named ‘Arhaus’ beamed towards Forhan as well, then looked at Linley. Rather puzzled, he said, “I knew that this time, three Elders were coming, but I’ve never met this one before...oh, I know!”

Arhaus had a look of sudden understanding on his face, and he laughed as he said to Linley, “In Bloodbath Valley, I’ve heard that our Azure Dragon clan has a new Elder.”

“I am Arhaus. Elder Linley, right?” Arhaus laughed as he extended his hand.

“Right. Elder Arhaus, greetings.” Linley laughed and extended his hand as well.

Linley had a good impression of Arhaus, but as for Forhan and Emanuel, Linley, from the bottom of his heart, disliked this father-son pair. Both Emanuel and Forhan made him feel as though they were sinister and vicious. Emanuel’s actual actions, in turn, had confirmed Linley’s judgment.

“We warmly welcome the three of you. Come, let’s go meet the Grand Elder.” Arhaus laughed.

“Mother?” Forhan’s eyes couldn’t help but light up.

Linley glanced sideways, seeing the looks on Forhan and Emanuel’s faces. The two clearly were very eager to meet the Grand Elder. The Grand Elder and Patriarch ‘Gislason’ were actual siblings, brother and sister, and in the clan, her power was second only to that of the Patriarch’s.

“Linley, it’s been a long time since our clan has had a new Elder.” Arhaus said warmly. “I’ve heard that you’ve previously sparred with Emanuel, and that you are incredibly strong. In the future, when you do battle for the clan, you definitely have to win some glory for our Azure Dragon clan.”

“Definitely.” Linley laughed and nodded.

Forhan, seeing how Arhaus was continuously chatting with Linley, couldn’t help but interrupt. “Arhaus, what’s the current situation in the struggle between our Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans?”

“How good can it be?” Arhaus shook his head and sighed. “The eight great clans are simply relying on superior numbers to win. All combined, their eight clans have more Seven Star Fiends than we do. If we continue fighting like this...most likely in just ten or twenty thousand years, our entire Four Divine Beasts clan will have less than ten Seven Star Fiends.”

Hearing this, Linley was shocked.

“In ten or twenty thousand years, we’ll lose that many?” Linley couldn’t help but say. “Currently, our Four Divine Beasts clan should have nearly a hundred Seven Star Fiends.”

The Azure Dragon clan alone had thirty six. The four clans, combined, should have more than a hundred Seven Star Fiends. How could it be possible that in as short a period of time as ten or twenty thousand years, only ten would be left?

“Linley, I hear that you just joined the clan recently.” Arhaus said resignedly. “You aren’t too familiar with the situation. However, I trust that at the Conclave of Elders, you should have learned of our losses in the past thousand years.”

Linley nodded.

In the past thousand years, they had killed two enemy Seven Star Fiends, while two of their own Seven Star Fiends had been weakened as well.

“Our Azure Dragon clan alone has lost two Seven Star Fiends in the past thousand years. Of course, Jeffs, when using his original body to fuse with a divine spark, will be able to recover his strength. But still, he’ll have lost any chance to gain in strength in the future.”

Arhaus said, “In a thousand years, our Four Divine Beasts clan, all combined, has lost five. In especially brutal periods, it’s normal to lose as many as ten Elders. You do the math. How many will we lose in ten thousand years?”

Linley did the math, and he was stunned.

In ten thousand years, at least seventy or eighty Elders would be doomed.

“That’s why I said that if this continues, in ten or twenty thousand years, our clan will have lost almost all of our Seven Star Fiends.” Arhaus said bitterly. “Nothing we can do. The eight great clans...even if we exhaust all of our Elders against them, they will most likely still have half of their Seven Star Fiends remaining!”

Linley nodded.

As soon as he had arrived in the Azure Dragon clan, Linley had heard that any one of those eight great clans were comparable to the Azure Dragon clan. The number of Seven Star Fiends in the eight great clans, all combined, definitely was far greater than the number the Four Divine Beasts clan had.

“Linley, do you know how many Elders we had before the ancestor died?” Arhaus said.

“How many?” Linley asked.

“More than sixty. And that was just our Azure Dragon tribe.” Arhaus said, and Linley couldn’t help but sigh in shock. “No wonder it was said that the Four Divine Beasts clansmen dominated each of the major planes. Not only did we have a strong supporter, we ourselves had tremendous power.”

“Only, while we were regrouping, enemies attacked from every direction. Linley, you must understand that the clans which pursued us all the way to the Infernal Realm just represent the minority. We have many enemies in the other planes.” Arhaus said resignedly.

The Four Divine Beasts clan truly had too many enemies.

As many as eight clans were still in pursuit of them. Most likely, when the Four Divine Beasts clan had been spread across each of the major planes, the number of enemies they had was far more than their current number.

“All we can do is go all out.” Forhan said solemnly.

“Right. We can only go all out!” Arhaus said as well. “If we just hide in the Skyrise Mountains like turtles in a shell and don’t even fight back, most likely we’ll become the laughing stock of the major clans of the Infernal Realm. Our Four Divine Beasts clan cannot be humiliated like that!”

While they were chatting, Linley and the others were heading deeper into Bloodbath Gorge.

Within Bloodbath Gorge, there was an organized array of buildings that were arranged in rows like soldiers, divided into various areas. On the way over, Linley encountered small groups of experts as well, all of whom were at least of the Six Star Fiend level of power.

Linley couldn’t help but sigh in amazement.

“This is the true foundation of a great clan. And a great clan which has fallen, at that.” Linley was amazed, while at the same time, stunned by the savagery of the warfare between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans.

“We’ve arrived at the Azure Dragon Palace!” Arhaus said.

Linley lifted his head. In front was a building that was at least thirty meters tall, completely dark red in color. At the tip of the building, there was something that was dimly glowing with azure light. There were four buildings of this appearance within Bloodbath Gorge.

“The Grand Elder is on the fifth floor of the Azure Dragon Palace. This palace is the place where we normally gather together.” Arhaus said.

He led Linley, Emanuel, and Forhan directly to the fifth floor. The entire Azure Dragon Palace actually didn’t even have a single maid or servant within.

The main hall on the fifth floor appeared to be rather wide and empty.

“Where is the Grand Elder?” Linley stared around the main hall, puzzled.

Linley suddenly had a feeling, and he turned to look towards the side of the hall. He saw a tall, slender human figure fly over, her entire body enveloped in a long black robe. Her graceful, jade-green hair fell down past her waist, and her face was covered by a silver mask which had a strange light flowing atop it.

As this person entered the main hall, Arhaus and the others all fell silent.

“She is the Grand Elder?” Linley looked at this person carefully.

“Whoosh!” The mysterious woman’s long robe rustled as she sat down on the head seat in the hall. She swept everyone present with her icy gaze, pausing momentarily on Linley, and then she said in a cold, clear voice, “You can all be seated.”

“Yes, Grand Elder.” The four replied respectfully.

Linley, puzzled, glanced at Forhan. Supposedly, Forhan was the son of the Grand Elder. But he, too, addressed her as ‘Grand Elder’? In his heart, he was puzzled, but Linley still sat down alongside Forhan and the others.

“Linley.” The Grand Elder suddenly said while looking at Linley.

“Grand Elder.” Linley bowed fractionally.

“I heard that you defeated Emanuel, then became an Elder.” The Grand Elder said coolly.

“Correct.” Linley immediately responded, but in his heart, he was puzzled. “What does the Grand Elder mean by this? Is she warning me, or...? Emanuel is her grandson, after all.” Although he didn’t understand, Linley remained calm.

“I know that you and Emanuel have some misgivings about each other. However, I hope that the two of you will be unified and will be able to work with each other.” The Grand Elder said.

Linley was startled. He couldn’t help but turn to look at Emanuel, who was also currently looking towards Linley.

“Work together with him?” Linley felt that this was a huge joke.

The Grand Elder's voice was like clashing steel. "Ever since Father fell, our Four Divine Beasts clan has been in unprecedentedly dire straits. Although we are now all assembled in Indigo Prefecture, we still meet with constant challenges and provocations."

"However, we are the Four Divine Beasts clan! We, the members of the Four Divine Beasts clan, will not allow ourselves to be humiliated!"

"Although we can hide in the Skyrite Mountains like a turtle in its shell, our proud clansmen will not submit and be humiliated. One Elder after another, leading the elites of our clan, has gone out to do battle against the enemy. Any who challenges or provokes our clan will be punished!"

"The experts of our Four Divine Beasts clan are not as numerous as those of those eight great clans. Thus, we absolutely must be unified."

The Grand Elder swept her gaze across the people present. "Linley, I don't care what sort of problems you and Emanuel have had in the past. From today onward, you two are not permitted to battle against each other. If such a thing happens...I will be the first to kill both of you!"

"Yes, Grand Elder."

Linley and Emanuel replied in unison.

"Our Azure Dragon Palace has, in total, twenty squads. Currently, there are three squads that do not have a captain. They are Squad Thirteen, Squad Fifteen, and Squad Nineteen." The Grand Elder said calmly. "I will make the arrangements. Linley..."

Linley took a step forward.

"From today onward, you will be the captain of Squad Thirteen of the Azure Dragon clan in Bloodbath Gorge!"

"Yes." Linley acknowledged respectfully.

The Grand Elder's gaze turned to Forhan, her voice as cold as ever. "Forhan, from today onward, you will be the captain of Squad Fifteen of the Azure Dragon clan in Bloodbath Gorge!"

"Yes." Forhan took a step forward as well as he acknowledged respectfully.

"Emanuel, from today onward, you will be the captain of Squad Nineteen of the Azure Dragon clan in Bloodbath Gorge!"

Emanuel also strode forward and assented.

"Very good." The Grand Elder nodded slightly, then looked at Arhaus. "Arhaus, you can now lead Linley to the location of Squad Thirteen. Afterwards, come back. I have an assignment for you."

"An assignment?" Arhaus' eyes lit up.

"First take Linley to his place." The Grand Elder ordered.

"Yes." Arhaus immediately turned and looked towards Linley, who nodded, then followed Arhaus away. As he left, Linley heard the Grand Elder's voice. "Forhan, Emanuel, you stay here. There's something I will discuss with you!"

And then, Linley and Arhaus left the Azure Dragon Palace.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 22,

Comfort

“Why did this Grand Elder have Forhan and Emanuel stay behind?” Linley felt suspicious. “The Grand Elder, on the surface, said that we have to be unified, but in the end, Forhan is still her son and Emanuel is still her grandson. It’s unlikely that she’ll be completely impartial.”

“Whoosh!” A cold wind blew past, interrupting Linley’s pondering.

Linley and Arhaus walked together on the stone road. There were quite a few courtyards on each side of the stone road, all seeming quite plain. Linley and Arhaus were both thinking on their own matters, and so didn’t speak to each other.

“Ah, Linley.” Arhaus suddenly laughed. “I’m sorry. I was thinking about my assignment. I’ve been neglecting you.”

“It’s fine.” Linley said with amusement. “As long as you don’t lead me the wrong way.”

“Bloodbath Gorge is only so large. There’s less than a thousand people here, all combined. How could I get lost?” Arhaus laughed. “Your Squad Thirteen has a total of ten squad members, all experts of the clan. They are all at least at the Six Star Fiend level, and some of them are approaching the Seven Star Fiend level.”

Arhaus warned, “Linley, don’t underestimate them. After all, there isn’t a huge difference between Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends.”

Linley nodded.

For example, that ‘Learmonth’ he had encountered in the Redbud Continent was a Six Star Fiend, but he was very nearly at the level of a Seven Star Fiend in power.

“Some are skilled in soul attacks, others specialize in material attacks, while still others specialize in escaping. Everyone has their own special techniques as well. Some rely on sound, others rely on venom...in short, Six Star Fiends aren’t necessarily weaker than Seven Star Fiends. As long as you lead them well and give good guidance and seize the weaknesses of the enemies, it’s not impossible to overcome a deficit in power.” Arhaus said.

“Well spoken.” Linley nodded in approval.

For example, before he himself had undergone the Ancestral Baptism, he was capable of defeating a Seven Star Fiend who specialized in material attacks, but was afraid of Six Star Fiends who specialized in soul attacks.

Power wasn’t an absolute concept.

“Arhaus, look. The aura those warriors have is extraordinary.” Linley saw that in the distance, there were three blood-robed warriors walking on the road. These three had callous, grim faces. Even when smiling, they made others feel great pressure.

This was because experts like them were brimming with killing intent.

“The warriors of Bloodbath Gorge have all encountered countless life-and-death battles. Naturally, they will carry the aura of those battles with them.” Arhaus said in praise.

“We arrived at Squad Thirteen.” Arhaus suddenly said.

Linley saw as well that up ahead, there was a stone pillar, atop which was carved the word, ‘Thirteen’. At the sides of the stone pillar were carved names, quite a few of which were red.

“The names on top are those of the members of Squad Thirteen over the past ten thousand years.” Arhaus said solemnly. “A single squad usually has ten squad members. Each time a squad member dies, they will be replaced. The deceased squad members will have their names turn red.”

Linley looked carefully at each of the names.

“Squad Thirteen!” Arhaus suddenly roared.

Instantly, people came flying out from rooms nearby the stone pillar, each of them dressed in a blood-colored war-uniform. In the blink of an eye, the ten Six Star Fiend squad members had all arrived. Linley carefully looked at them.

Eight men, two women.

“These ten, just judging from their aura alone, are all extraordinary. They feel like ten Learmonths.” Linley said to himself.

When he had just entered the Infernal Realm, how could Linley have imagined that today, he would be commanding ten Six Star Fiends?

“Elder Arhaus?” A woman with short jade hair said. “Who is this person by your side?” The other Six Star Fiends also looked at Linley in puzzlement. They clearly didn’t recognize Linley.

“This is our Azure Dragon clan’s newest Elder, ‘Linley’.” Arhaus said. “He is also the captain of your Squad Thirteen.”

“Captain?” The ten Six Star Fiends looked at each other.

“He really is an Elder?” A man asked.

Laughing, Linley flipped his hand, revealing a medallion. This was the Elder’s medallion he had received after becoming an Elder. Upon seeing this medallion, the ten squad members were no longer dubious. They all said respectfully, “Captain!”

Any of the battle squads within Bloodbath Gorge had an Elder as the captain.

Thus, when they saw that Linley was an Elder, they naturally recognized him as their captain.

“Captain, my name is Melina [Mei’li’na].” The jade-haired woman laughed. “I wonder, Captain, if you can demonstrate your ultimate technique to us?”

Linley was slightly startled, then glanced at the other Six Star Fiends. None of them said anything, but from their gazes, it was apparent that they wanted Linley to give a demonstration. Linley mused to himself, “It seems that soldiers in both the material planes as well as the higher planes are all the same; to be a good commander, you first have to be able to impress your subordinates.”

How could Six Star Fiends not have their own pride?

If they didn't personally witness Linley's power, how could they possibly submit willingly?

"You guys..." Arhaus laughed.

"Then I'll let you experience it for yourself." Linley laughed calmly. Immediately, a blurry, earthen yellow light sprang up, instantly forming a large globe of light that covered all ten of the squad members within.

Blackstone Space!

The sudden appearance of the Blackstone Space caused the ten Six Star Fiends to be caught completely off guard. Three of them even swayed, nearly falling before hurriedly using their hands to push off the floor in order to stand back up. In the Blackstone Space, even Six Star Fiends would still sense that astonishing gravity.

"When you are under such tremendous pressure, tell me...would it be easy for me to kill you?" Linley laughed calmly.

The ten squad members, having experienced that terrifying gravity, looked at each other then laughed.

"Captain!" The ten simultaneously fell to one knee, paying their respects to him.

They completely submitted.

Linley laughed, then withdrew his Blackstone Space. "You can all rise."

"Captain, this is wonderful. With your Gravitational Space, when fighting against enemies, we will have a huge advantage." A muscular man said excitedly. "In the Gravitational Space, the enemy's movements will be restricted, but ours will not. Even if the enemy is a Seven Star Fiend, I'd still dare to give them a good fight."

That the personal strength of the captain was strong wouldn't cause these squad members to be too excited. After all, the strength of the captain was a personal matter.

What truly made them was when a captain was skilled at supportive techniques and able to assist all the squad members. Like Linley! As long as Linley didn't apply the Gravitational Space to them, they could easily battle against more powerful Seven Star Fiends.

"What is your name?" Linley laughed as he looked at the muscular man in front of him.

"My name is Shanda [Shan'ta]!" The muscular man immediately laughed.

"All of you, introduce yourselves to me." Linley laughed as he looked at his subordinates. From today onwards, as long as he wasn't dead, he would be the leader of this squad. They would battle together and share life and death together!

Linley deeply valued these subordinates of his.

These squad members were very excited as well, now that they had a captain whose ultimate technique was a supportive ability. They naturally were very exuberant in chatting with Linley.

"Linley." The nearby Arhaus finally spoke out.

"Oh. Apologies." Linley immediately said. "While chatting with them, I forgot that you, Elder Arhaus, were still here."

Arhaus shook his head and laughed. "It's fine. However, I can't stay here much longer. The Grand Elder has an assignment for me. I have to make a trip."

Arhaus parted with Linley, who moved into the residence for the captain of Squad Thirteen. From this day onward, Linley had to lead these ten Six Star Fiends into battle against the eight great clans.

Time passed quickly, and in the blink of an eye, more than a year had passed.

Within that gorge in the Skyrite Mountains.

Delia was resting against Linley's arm, leaning against him while the two took a stroll together. Linley looked at Delia by his side, and in his heart, a slow, gentle feeling emerged. Linley deeply enjoyed this sort of warm feeling.

"Linley, at first, I thought that when you became a captain at that Bloodbath Gorge, you would immediately go engage in battles and not have time to accompany me. So as it turns out, the battles are actually quite rare." Delia especially valued the time she and Linley had to spend together.

The clan was in a crisis. Delia knew this, and she wouldn't force Linley to do anything. It was enough for her to value what they had.

"I've been a captain for a year now, but I haven't engaged in a single battle." Linley laughed calmly. "Actually, the number of battles each squad in Bloodbath Gorge engages in is fairly low. Only, every single battle is against the top-tier experts of the enemy clans, and in each battle, life and death are separated by only a hair. We have Seven Star Fiends, but they do as well, and in fact, they have even more! We are in a position of weakness!"

Linley felt the pressure as well, while at the same time, he felt that he also wasn't doing right by Delia.

Whether it was in the Yulan Plane or here in the Infernal Realm, Delia had always quietly supported him. Even as they roamed in every direction and faced one crisis after another, Delia had never complained.

"As long as I don't have any missions, I'll always be by your side." Linley said gently into Delia's ear, while at the same time he kissed her by her earlobe.

Delia's face instantly turned slightly rosy.

"We're outdoors." Delia immediately looked around. She couldn't help but glare at Linley, her cheeks flushed.

Linley just laughed.

No matter what sort of battles or difficulties he encountered, when he was with Delia, Linley felt incredibly relaxed. With Delia here, his soul had a harbor to return to.

The second year Linley was serving as the captain of Squad Thirteen.

Bloodbath Gorge didn't have too many requirements of its captains, who normally were able to live in other places throughout the Skyrite Mountains. If there was an assignment, they naturally would be informed. As for those ordinary squad members, each year, they were permitted one month outside of the gorge.

"Elder.

"Elder."

As Linley walked on the stone road within Bloodbath Gorge, quite a few blood-robed warriors called out to him respectfully upon seeing him. This was true for not just the Azure Dragon clan, but also the White Tiger clan, or the other two clans. In Bloodbath Gorge, they were all the same.

After such a long period of time, they all recognized Linley.

“Arhaus.” Linley saw, to his surprise, that in the distance, there was a familiar figure. Arhaus. Only, Arhaus had a terrible look on his face. Linley immediately walked over, and Arhaus saw Linley as well.

“Linley.” Arhaus forced out a smile.

“Arhaus, it’s been a year since I saw you. Your mission is complete?” Linley laughed.

“The mission is complete.” Arhaus let out a low sigh.

“What is it?” Linley had a bad premonition.

Arhaus glanced at Linley, a bitter look in his eyes. “Linley, didn’t you notice that this body is a divine wind clone?”

“Uh...right.” Linley carefully scrutinized him, and Arhaus sighed. “The enemies for this mission were too powerful. Only four out of the ten members of my Squad Six are alive. The rest died. My most powerful clone, the divine water clone, was destroyed as well.”

Linley was stunned.

The most powerful type of divine clone for the vast majority of the Azure Dragon clansmen was a divine water clone. If Linley had lived within the Four Divine Beasts clan ever since he was young, he too would have undergone the Ancestral Baptism at an early age, and most likely he too would primarily train in water, and not in the earth, as he currently did.

“Then you...” Linley didn’t know what to say.

“My divine water clone is finished. What can I do?” Arhaus shook his head. “In the future, I won’t be an Elder any longer. I don’t have that level of power. The reason I came today was to report this to the Grand Elder.”

When Elders went forth to do battle, they would leave their useless divine clones behind.

One reason was to be able to quickly provide intelligence reports to Bloodbath Gorge; the second was to preserve a life.

“Arhaus, don’t be too dispirited.” Linley didn’t know what to say.

Arhaus took a deep breath. “What’s there to be dispirited about? When I go back, I’ll train hard. The day will come when my divine wind clone will become equally powerful. When that day comes, I’ll go seek out that group of bastards once more!” A savage light appeared in Arhaus’ eyes.

Linley, seeing the look on Arhaus’ face, couldn’t help but be astonished.

Linley suddenly realized that with this constant cycle of revenge, the hatred between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans was growing deeper and deeper. The experts of the Four Divine Beasts clan were dying, but so too were the experts of the enemies. If this continued...

The end result definitely would be a case where one side would be wiped out.

“Linley, in battle, you cannot show any mercy. These are not ordinary battles. Between our Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans, there will never be a day of reconciliation. As soon as they have a chance, they will mercilessly kill you.” Arhaus warned.

“Don’t worry.”

Linley had come all the way from the Yulan Plane. He knew what was an appropriate time to show mercy, and what was an appropriate time to be ruthless! To be merciful to the members of the eight great clans was the same as being ruthless to his own clansmen.

“Elder Linley!” A blood-robed warrior came running from afar.

Linley turned to look. “What is it?” Linley didn’t recognize this blood-robed warrior.

The blood-robed warrior bowed respectfully. “The Grand Elder is asking you to see her, Elder Linley.”

Linley felt a surge of excitement. He had been the captain of this Squad Thirteen for almost a year now, but this was the first time the Grand Elder had summoned him.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 23,

Receiving the Order

“Has a mission finally come?” Linley turned to look at Arhaus, saying apologetically, “Arhaus, I need to go speak with the Grand Elder.”

Arhaus, his face solemn, immediately said, “Linley, the Grand Elder won’t summon you without a reason. For her to be summoning you now, there’s a 90% chance it has to do with having you go do battle against the eight great clans. Linley, you must be careful. The eight great clans truly are formidable.”

They had been able to force the Four Divine Beasts clan into a situation like this. If it hadn’t been for the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, the Four Divine Beasts clan might even have been eradicated. How could the eight great clans not be powerful?

“I will be careful.”

Linley laughed, then immediately turned and moved at high speed towards the Azure Dragon Palace of the Grand Elder. The blood-robed warrior immediately followed as well.

Arhaus watched as Linley left, then softly said, “Brother Linley, you have to make it back alive!”

Every single clan of the Four Divine Beasts clans and the eight great clans could be ranked amongst the top twenty clans of the entire Infernal Realm. So many ancient clans had moved here from other planes, gathering here to engage in a wild battle.

This sort of large-scale battle between supreme clans was something which the Four Higher Planes might not see even once in countless years.

Experts against experts!

In this sort of war, the true battles were primarily carried out by Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends. Battles at this level...generally speaking, how many experts on this level could a single clan have? After all, in the Infernal Realm, any clan that had a single Seven Star Fiend would be considered a formidable clan.

However, in the battles between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans...one Seven Star Fiend after another was killed, while Six Star Fiends were killed in batches!

This sort of vicious battle between supreme clans had stunned the countless clans of the Infernal Realm. They could do nothing but watch! Even a clan as powerful as the Bagshaw clan wouldn’t dare to get involved. After all, the war was simply too brutal.

As for someone as powerful as Linley, in this sort of large-scale war with no retreat, he would be one of the Seven Star Fiends that would engage in blood-soaked battle for the Azure Dragon clan.

The Azure Dragon Palace. The fifth floor’s main hall.

A long black robe. Loose azure hair. A silver mask. This was the Grand Elder of the Azure Dragon clan! The Grand Elder’s body seemed quite tall and slender. She sat there quietly, not moving at all. There was no way to tell what she was thinking.

A long time later...

"It's time to let him gain some experience." The Grand Elder let out a slow sigh.

Suddenly, the Grand Elder turned her head to look at the door. Hearing footsteps ring out, she then saw Linley stride in. Upon seeing the Grand Elder, Linley immediately saluted respectfully. "Linley greets the Grand Elder."

"Linley. Sit!" The Grand Elder said calmly.

Linley immediately saluted, then sat down.

"Linley, you have been the captain of Squad Thirteen for more than a year now, right?" The Grand Elder said.

"Yes, Grand Elder." Linley replied.

The Grand Elder's voice turned gentle. "Do you know that after you defeated Emanuel and were promoted to the rank of Elder by the Patriarch, the Patriarch and I have been in earnest discussions regarding you."

Linley was stunned.

At this moment, the voice of the Grand Elder was very friendly. This couldn't help but cause Linley to feel puzzled. The Grand Elder was usually always quite cold and emotionless; why was she like this today? "Can it also be because of the Coiling Dragon ring?" Linley said to himself.

The Coiling Dragon ring was the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact of the Sovereign 'Azure Dragon'.

"Originally, the Patriarch wanted to let you continue to train. After all, given your current accomplishments, if you reach the Highgod level, you will definitely become yet another trump card our clan has!" The Grand Elder sighed. "Currently, you are only a Seven Star Fiend. You can't be considered a trump card yet."

"Trump card?" Linley looked at the Grand Elder.

If he were to train to the Highgod level, first of all, his soul would undergo a qualitative change. Not only would his soul defense strengthen yet again, even his 'Blackstone Space' and his 'Dragon Roar' would rise dramatically in power.

"When we say 'trump cards', we refer to experts who have surpassed ordinary Seven Star Fiends, and are comparable to the Asuras of the Infernal Realm or the Commanders of Purgatory." The Grand Elder said.

Linley nodded.

The Infernal Asuras and the Purgatory Commanders were indeed far mightier than most Seven Star Fiends.

For example, 'Reisgem'. Linley had just learned the 'Blackstone Space' from him, and had consequently become so powerful. But if Reisgem himself had used the technique? Also, the Purgatory Commander who was behind the Bagshaw clan, 'Mosi'. He was able to easily defeat 'Lomio', whose power had already approached the Asura level. The Infernal Realm's Asuras, the Commanders of Purgatory...each and every one of them was a terrifyingly powerful opponent.

They were all very close to being at the very peak of possible power for Highgods.

“In our Azure Dragon clan, only three people, throughout all these countless years, have been considered ‘trump cards’.” The Grand Elder said. “Aside from myself and the Patriarch, the only other one is that ‘Genius Elder’, Blue [Bu’lu].”

“Elder Blue?” Linley knew this person as well.

He himself had been publicly acknowledged by the many Elders as having the fourth most powerful body in the Azure Dragon clan. The first and the second most powerful bodies naturally belonged to the Patriarch and the Grand Elder. As for the third, that was their ‘Genius Elder’, Blue. Blue’s might was utterly unquestionable.

“A true trump card cannot have any weaknesses, be it in material defense or spiritual defense! On this foundation of having no weaknesses, one then needs to have an ultimate technique that can allow one to dominate the Infernal Realm. This is what a trump card is!”

The Grand Elder shook her head. “You are currently just a God. Although by relying on the Azure Dragon ring, you are able to make up for the difference in soul strength, I imagine that the Azure Dragon ring should be a damaged one, and so you still have a flaw.”

Linley nodded.

“Thus, your weakness is your soul defense. After all, in terms of quality, your soul strength is just at the God level.” The Grand Elder shook her head as she spoke. “Only once you become a Highgod can you be considered as flawless.”

“When the Patriarch saw you!” The Grand Elder’s voice contained a hint of joy. “He knew that our clan would in the future have our fourth trump card!”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

Naturally, he felt happy upon being hearing praise. Only, Linley also knew that he would only ‘in the future’ become the fourth trump card.

The Grand Elder glanced at Linley, then sighed softly. “Unfortunately, you aren’t a Highgod.”

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. He said to himself, “Grand Elder, do you know that if it hadn’t been for your grandson Emanuel, I would only have gone out to do battle after training to the Highgod level.” In addition, it had been Forhan who had used verbal traps to force him to go to Bloodbath Gorge.

Linley had no choices.

“Linley, how is your soul defense?” The Grand Elder asked.

“Even if I encounter Seven Star Fiends skilled in soul attacks, I would dare do battle against them.” Linley said very proudly, but then he said with resignation, “But of course, if I were to encounter a super-expert who is extremely skilled in soul attacks, then I won’t be able to fight.”

For example, the Purgatory Commander ‘Mosi’.

This person was able to control the souls of even Seven Star Fiends. Soul attacks as powerful as his definitely weren’t manageable for the likes of Linley.

“If that’s the case...that’s good enough.”

The Grand Elder's voice contained a hint of exuberance. "In order to make things safer, you can go ambush the forces of the Barbary clan. Actually, only against their forces will you have an above 90% chance of survival."

Above 90% chance of survival? And only against the Barbary clan?

Linley couldn't help but feel speechless.

His body was tough, and his soul wasn't weak either. There shouldn't be many capable of killing him.

"Linley!"

The Grand Elder's forehead furrowed, and she shouted, "You must be careful, careful! You can't be the slightest bit negligent or lax. Every single Seven Star Fiend which engages in battle in this war between our Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans can be considered one of the top experts of the entire Infernal Realm! We have our trump cards, but the eight great clans have their own as well!"

"The Patriarch and I are both confident in our ability to easily kill you." The Grand Elder said coldly. "The eight great clans also have supreme experts who are comparable to us in power!"

Linley's heart trembled.

This was a rude awakening! Ever since his Ancestral Baptism, he did seem to have been a bit excessively over-confident.

He forgot the old saying; no matter how tall a mountain is, there is always a taller one somewhere!

Who were his foes?

They were supreme clans who had come in pursuit from other planes, and there were eight of them in total! Behind the Bagshaw clan was the Purgatory Commander, 'Mosi'. The Azure Dragon clan also had the Patriarch, the Grand Elder, and other such supreme experts.

Could it be the eight great clans didn't?

How powerful did their foes have to be, to be able to force the Four Divine Beasts clan to the point of needing the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture to intervene?!

"Your potential is tremendous. Thus, I don't dare send you to carry out the most dangerous tasks. In the eight great clans, only the 'Barbary' clan that comes from the Divine Water Plane is unspecialized in soul attacks." The Grand Elder said. "The others, such as the Boleyn clan from the Celestial Realm, or the Chanel clan of the Divine Fire Plane, or the Ashcroft clan of the Netherworld...many of the experts of these clans are extremely proficient in soul attacks."

Linley's forehead began to be matted with sweat.

Most of the experts of the Boleyn clan trained in the 'Edicts of Fate'. When Linley had just arrived in Indigo Prefecture, he had personally watched those experts of the Boleyn clan easily kill a group of Highgods.

"Can't be overconfident. Can't be overconfident. The enemies are extremely strong, this time." Linley reminded himself.

Against ordinary clans or the ordinary experts of the Infernal Realm, he was indeed strong enough to be arrogant and proud.

A Seven Star Fiend? Yes, he was quite powerful.

But in this war between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans, this bit of power he had was only enough for him to participate! There were many who were more powerful than he was!

“The Barbary clan stems from the Divine Water Plane, and thus specializes in the Elemental Laws of Water. The Elemental Laws of Water are not very suited for soul attacks, but their soul defenses and physical defenses are all exceedingly powerful.” The Grand Elder said. “But as I see it, you have an advantage over them.”

Linley nodded.

As long as the opponents didn't specialize in soul attacks, he still had some degree of confidence.

“But you cannot be too overconfident. For example, our Azure Dragon clan also produced someone like you, who specializes in the Laws of the Earth. It is possible that perhaps this Barbary clan has also produced an expert who specializes in soul attacks.” The Grand Elder warned yet again.

“Understood.” How could Linley dare to continue to be overconfident?

With a flip of her hand, the Grand Elder retrieved a large map, and began to point out directions on the map...

As the Grand Elder continued to explain, Linley completely understood what this mission was about.

“Linley, leave behind a divine clone here at Bloodbath Gorge, just in case.” The Grand Elder said.

“Right.” Linley nodded. “Then Grand Elder, I'll go summon my forces.”

“Go.” The Grand Elder nodded.

Linley directly flew out from the fifth floor's window, leaving the Azure Dragon Palace and heading to the residences of Squad Thirteen. The Grand Elder watched as Linley flew away, and then she said softly, “The clan doesn't have enough time. We have to let Linley go participate in battle. Perhaps in the middle of the war, he will make breakthroughs faster.”

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“All members of Squad Thirteen, assemble. We have a mission.” Linley flew to a location directly above the residences of Squad Thirteen, then shouted.

Immediately, one figure after another shot out. Instantly, all ten of them were assembled. Those people who saw from afar that Squad Thirteen was assembling all silently prayed for them. Every single time a squad was sent out for a mission, they were dancing between life and death.

Currently, Squad Thirteen was fully manned, but after this mission was concluded, who knew how many would remain?

“Captain, we have a mission?” That jade-haired woman said in surprise.

“Right. Make your preparations. We're about to head out immediately.” Linley said. At the same time, another ‘Linley’ flew out from his body, entering the captain's residence. It looked like just a single divine clone, but in reality, this divine clone had two other divine clones within it.

Linley was only taking a single divine clone on the mission.

“We’re about to start again.” The ten squad members all had solemn looks on their faces, and most of them also made their divine clones fly out from their bodies and return to their residences.

Linley looked at these ten, then said calmly, “Remember. On this assignment, you must completely obey my orders. I hope that just like how there were eleven of us when we set off, when we return, we will still number eleven.”

“Yes, Captain.” The ten replied in unison.

“Move out!”

Linley immediately took to the skies, flying directly south. The ten Six Star Fiends followed tightly behind him. The first mission for Squad Thirteen after Linley had become a captain was finally beginning!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 24, Give Me a Ride

Linley was dressed in a sky-blue robe. As he moved through the skies, the long robe fluttered, ruffled by the wind. Behind him, those ten Six Star Fiends were also dressed in uniforms of various colors. While engaging in battle outside, if they were all dressed in the same uniform, it would be too obvious and would result in them being easily discovered by the enemy.

“Everyone, be careful. Our target this time is a squad of the Barbary clan. No matter what, don’t let them discover us. Just fly close to the ground.” Linley instructed, while at the same time, he himself flew downwards, moving close to the surface of the ground. The ten squadmates followed suit.

“Don’t worry, Captain. We won’t go out of our way to engage in battle. They won’t be able to find out.” Melina laughed.

Go out of their way to engage in battle?

Linley couldn’t help but think back to some information the Grand Elder had given him before battle had begun. Both the Four Divine Beasts clan as well as the eight great clans used ambushes, and also laid in wait for the enemy to draw near.

If, for example, the Four Divine Beasts clan didn’t want to fight, they would simply hide in the Skyrise Mountains, and there would be nothing the eight great clans could do about it.

If the eight great clans remained in their own territory and didn’t come out, the Four Divine Beasts clan wouldn’t go to them either.

However...

The eight great clans hated the Four Divine Beasts clan to the core, and the reverse was true as well! Thus, they intentionally challenged each other to battle, time and time again! Neither side would hide. Both sides knew that this was a war of attrition, but the eight great clans were willing to engage in this sort of war, while the Four Divine Beasts clan was too proud and unwilling to submit.

“The eight great clans is quite interesting. Each time, they’ll take predefined routes. This is just a naked challenge.” Linley said to himself.

Of the eight great clans, four of them were located at the eastern edges of Indigo Prefecture, while four were at the western edges of Indigo Prefecture. They were all very unified. They were worried that if they split up, the Four Divine Beasts clan would break them one by one.

But by dividing up in this manner, there was no way the Four Divine Beasts clan would be able to do so.

In addition...

The eight great clans on each side of Indigo Prefecture would often send squads of experts on round trip patrols. Each trip, they would take one of two predefined routes. Any members of the Four Divine Beasts clan they met on the way would be killed!

Sometimes, they would even engage in ambushes at the outer perimeter of the Skyrise Mountains.

“How could my Four Divine Beasts clan possibly swallow this sort of provocation? They are so arrogant as to take predetermined routes. If we just accept this, the Four Divine Beasts clan will become a laughingstock.” Linley understood that in their battles, the enemies were the proactive challengers. After all, their experts were simply too numerous.

After flying for roughly three days, Linley’s group reached their destination, an intelligence outpost located near the predetermined route. Linley glanced at a distant sand dune, which wasn’t very remarkable in this desolate, barren area.

“You can come out.” Linley said calmly.

This intelligence outpost had been provided by the Grand Elder.

The sand dune twisted, and then a figure emerged from within it. It was a very slender, yellow-robed youth. The yellow-robed youth, momentarily puzzled, glanced at Linley, who with a laugh, extended his hand, revealing the Elder’s medallion within.

“Greetings, Elder.” The youth said hurriedly.

“When will the forces of the Barbary clan arrive?” Linley asked.

This intelligence outpost relied on using some special methods, as well as two divine clones in separate locations, to be able to quickly provide intelligence reports. This allowed intelligence reports to be transmitted very quickly. Even over a distance of a hundred million kilometers, the receiver would have the information as soon as the sender sent it.

“To be precise, it is presumed forces of the Barbary clan.” The intelligence agent said. “The presumed forces of the Barbary clan are still millions of kilometers away. Based on their advancing speed, in one or two days, they will arrive here.”

Linley nodded.

“You said, presumed? Can it be that you are not yet completely certain that it is the forces of the Barbary clan?” Linley asked, rather concerned.

“There’s no way to be absolutely certain. That squad, according to our intelligence reports, is primarily made up of water-type experts, but there are two who are not. We are only able to provisionally identify them as members of the Barbary clan, but it is also possible that this is a joint squad formed from two clans.” The youth said.

Linley frowned.

A mixed squad? This was exceedingly rare.

This was because the Elders of the Four Divine Beasts clan generally carried a drop of Sovereign’s Might on them. Once they no longer cared about life and death and activated that drop of Sovereign’s Might and went all out, even a Seven Star Fiend opponent would be doomed.

Thus, the enemy preferred to fight one-on-one. Only in a special circumstance, for example when the target was a Patriarch or Grand Elder level figure, would they send out a joint squad.

“You can stand down for now.” Linley instructed.

“The rest of you, follow me.” Linley flew into the air, and the ten Six Star Fiends followed.

The intelligence agent raised his head, watching them fly away. In his heart, he murmured, "Clansmen, you must win." As an intelligence agent, he too walked that fine line between life and death. If he were to be discovered by the enemies, the enemies wouldn't hesitate at all to kill him.

In addition, most of these intelligence agents were very weak.

Their only hope was that experts like Linley would avenge them if they were killed!

A few thousand kilometers away from the intelligence outpost, Linley's group came to a halt, hiding themselves within a mountain forest. Everyone had very grave expressions on their faces. They all knew that once battle began, they would very possibly die.

"Captain. When the enemies come, what is our plan?" The big fellow, 'Shanda', asked. The other squadmates looked at Linley as well.

"The first target is the enemy's Seven Star Fiend." Linley laughed calmly. "Ambushing is pointless. Given their divine sense, they'll be able to locate us. You just need to wait here. Once the enemies draw near, you can fly into my Blackstone Space and begin battle against them."

"Us, fly in?" Immediately, some squadmates grasped Linley's meaning. "Captain, you aren't going to attack alongside us?"

If they were to remain together, Linley would naturally include them within the Blackstone Space, and thus there was no need for them to 'fly in'.

"Right. I'll go ambush them." Linley laughed.

"What?" The ten people were shocked.

"Captain, you can't risk yourself like that. It's better if we stay together. How can you attack by yourself? It is too risky. Even if the ten of us die, you can't die, Captain." A skinny man said hurriedly.

Seven Star Fiends were extremely precious to the clan. They represented a mighty pillar supporting the clan.

"Don't worry. By attacking by myself, I have more than 90% confidence of success." Linley laughed.

"Huh?" The ten squadmates were stunned.

"As I will be hiding my aura, they'll only take me to be a God. They won't be on guard against me." Linley said. Indigo Prefecture was like other places; there were many tribes to be seen everywhere.

Gods were very common in the Infernal Realm.

Linley's group, while flying over, had encountered quite a few Gods and Demigods. Naturally, they didn't pay them any mind.

"They won't care about me, but when I draw near to them, I'll launch a sudden attack against them. This will definitely have an extraordinarily good effect." Linley said confidently.

"Captain." That Melina said worriedly. "Based on what we can see, you are indeed just a God. Your aura-hiding abilities are indeed formidable. But the enemies are Seven Star Fiends as well. There might be one of them who is capable of detecting your true power, that you are a Highgod."

The fact that Linley really was just a God was something which only a very, very small number of people in the entire Azure Dragon clan knew about.

For example, the Patriarch and the Grand Elder had discovered this on their own. As for others, even Emanuel believed Linley to be a Highgod who had previously been hiding his power.

“Discover my true power? Discover that I’m a Highgod?” Linley laughed.

He himself really was a God. Why would he need to hide his aura?

“Don’t worry. The enemy won’t find out.” Linley said with supreme confidence.

Immediately, another squad member said worriedly, “Captain, you can’t risk yourself like this. We should join forces and attack together. If we work together, we can still...”

“Enough.” Linley frowned. “I’ve made up my mind. Stop talking.”

The ten squadmates looked at each other, but they had no choice but to accept resignedly. Linley was the captain. At a time like this, they had to obey the orders of their captain. This was a basic requirement.

“You stay here. I’ll be ten kilometers away.” Linley instructed. “At such a short distance, once battle begins, you’ll notice it right away. You can immediately hurry to my location. In addition, their divine sense won’t be able to locate you.”

Generally speaking, the divine sense of a Highgod only extended to a thousand meters or so.

Even a Seven Star Fiend was limited to just a few thousand meters. But normally, would they extend their divine sense to the maximum range? Even in a battle squad, the Seven Star Fiend leader would generally just extend his divine sense to a thousand meters, to guarantee a degree of safety.

“Remember. Once battle begins, immediately come. But before it begins, you are not to draw near.” Linley snapped.

The ten were all worried for Linley.

“Do you understand?” Linley roared.

“Yes, Captian.” The ten affirmed.

Linley then flew towards a section of the road in front of them. “Captain, be careful.” A voice rang out from behind. Linley couldn’t help but chuckle. He immediately flew over ten kilometers, where there was a small, squad mountain. Linley dug a cave into the side of the tunnel, then entered it.

Within the cave, he was able to stare at the skies outside through the cave entrance.

“I’ll just pretend to be an ordinary God.” Linley laughed.

Linley was completely confident in this ambush. It would be a strange thing if they were able to see through it. After all, he really was a God.

Time passed, and in the blink of an eye, a day had gone by.

“Swoosh!”

Linley discovered a human figure flying over at high speed. It was that intelligence agent. In the short span of a day, the intelligence agent had already made multiple reports regarding the location of the enemy.

“Elder, the enemies are about to arrive. They are currently less than ten thousand kilometers from here.” The youth said hurriedly. “Elderly, remember clearly that the enemies are riding a metallic lifeform, which is shaped into a jade-green serpent.

“Less than ten thousand kilometers?” Linley was startled into full alert.

A metallic lifeform of a squad of the eight great clans advanced fairly quickly, capable of travelling four or five million kilometers in a day. Less than ten thousand kilometers would be traversed in a short period of time.

“Hurry up and inform the others.” Linley immediately instructed.

“Yes, Elder.” The intelligence agent, knowing that battle was coming, immediately flew away.

Linley immediately flew out of his cave. Walking in the mountain forests by one’s self was a fairly dangerous thing in the Infernal Realm, because other Deities would often be encountered. But Linley wanted this to happen...because this made him all the more unremarkable in the Infernal Realm.

An enormous green serpent flew through the air. It was the metallic lifeform.

“Elder, do you think the Four Divine Beasts clan will dare ambush us this time?” The metallic lifeform had more than ten people.

“Ambush us?”

The Elder was a bald man, very tall and powerful, at least three meters in height. The other squad members were all very tall, the shortest being 2.5 meters. This was caused by the special lineage of the Barbary clan. The eyes of the Elder gleamed with green light, and he laughed, “This time, we have Mr. Mosley [Mau’si’li] accompanying us. I am specialized in material attacks, while he is specialized in soul attacks. No matter who comes, there is no way they will escape with their life.”

“Cole [Ke’luo], I trust that your Barbary clan will be able to dispose of anyone without needing me to interfere.” The speaker was a balding old man who was dressed in a plain gray robe. His ear had two little serpents coiled through them.

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“Kid, you, a mere God, dare to roam about in the Infernal Realm? Hurry up, hand over your interspatial ring.” In front of Linley, more than ten bandits had appeared. There were simply too many bandits in the Infernal Realm. Even though Linley had worked hard to avoid them, in the end, he had still run into some.

“Interspatial ring?” Linley pretended to be terrified. “Okay, okay, I’ll give it to you.”

“Haha, not bad.” Those bandits, seeing how obedient Linley was, were very happy. One of them laughed, “We are in a benevolent mood and will spare your life. However, you have to join us. If you do not...”

“I’ll join.” Linley hurriedly nodded.

Right at this moment, in the distant skies, an enormous green serpent was flying over at high speed. Linley was overjoyed. This was the metallic lifeform of the enemy.

“Eh...why haven’t you handed the interspatial ring over yet?” A bandit shouted.

“Swoosh!” Linley suddenly charged into the skies.

The bandits were astonished, but then, enraged, they chased into the skies as well.

The metallic lifeform flew past, and as Linley rose into the heavens, he just so happened to draw near as well. The Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends within couldn't help but be rather unhappy.

“Motherf*cker, a group of bandits are causing trouble. They actually charged all the way over to us.”

They had already discovered that the people below them consisted of Gods. They weren't worried at all.

“Milords, please, save me. Help give me a ride. These people want to kill me.” Linley immediately flew to the side of that metallic lifeform, his face filled with terror and panic.

“F*ck off!” A Six Star Fiend immediately shouted.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 25,

Blood Splattering the Skies

The experts within the metallic lifeform were all frowning. They felt annoyed at a God coming and begging them for help. How could they be bothered to pay attention to minor figures like this?

“Save me!” Linley said frantically, but his gaze pierced through the metallic lifeform, seeing the people within clearly.

“If you stay here, we’ll kill you.” One of the Six Star Fiends shouted angrily.

“Haha, punk, you won’t be able to escape.” The group of bandits flew over as well. Only, they didn’t dare to disturb the metallic lifeform, for fear that the experts within would vent their anger on them.

“Let’s go. Stop paying attention to them.” The bald captain said calmly.

“BANG!” Suddenly, the metallic lifeform blew apart violently! All of the experts within the metallic lifeform were immediately shocked into wakefulness, while at the same time an earthen yellow light spread out, encapsulating a spherical region with a diameter of five hundred meters...Blackstone Space!

A powerful gravity that was pulling towards Linley!

“Whoosh, whoooosh.” The shattered metal scraps of the metallic lifeform flew out wildly towards Linley as well. During the explosion, everything was in a state of chaos, and none of the experts within the metallic lifeform had any idea what was going on.

In particular, that bald captain. He saw, to his amazement, that a clawed hand covered with draconic scales had appeared in front of his eyes!

“Not good, the Azure Dragon clan!” The bald captain only had enough time to be shocked and know what was about to happen.

“Slash!”

Linley’s sharp claws moved as fast as lightning, piercing directly into the bald captain’s head. “Bang!” The skull exploded, sending fresh blood flying everywhere and colliding with the shattered remnants of the metallic lifeform. A single Highgod spark fell into Linley’s palm.

In an instant, a Seven Star Fiend had died!

This Seven Star Fiend really had died an unfair death. When Linley had flown next to the metallic lifeform’s window, the distance between him and the captain was less than five or six meters. Five or six meters, to experts on Linley’s level...

In but an instant, like the striking of a flint, he had killed the opponent!

The only thing the Seven Star Fiend had done wrong was that he had been not been on guard at all. He didn’t suspect that the God who had been begging for help was actually a Seven Star Fiend!

“One.” Linley’s dark golden eyes swept the people in front of him. Previously, he had seen everyone within the metallic lifeform, but was only able to tell that the bald person was apparently their leader. He couldn’t tell what everyone else’s position was.

Thus, Linley’s first target had been that man.

“Whoooooosh.”

Within the powerful gravitational field of the Blackstone Space, the enemy experts frantically tried to resist the gravity, while at the same time, they discovered to their amazement that their captain had already been killed in an instant.

“Captain!” Quite a few of the Fiends called out in alarm.

“So he was their captain.” Linley was overjoyed. His guess had been correct. By relying on a sneak attack, he had killed a Seven Star Fiend. Thus, he had accomplished more than half of this mission.

Only now did those Fiends understand!

“So he is an expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” They now noticed Linley’s Dragonformed body.

“Mr. Mosley.” They hurriedly sent to the other Seven Star Fiend.

Mosley was from the Ashcroft clan, and was specialized in soul attacks. He was the other Seven Star Fiend in this squad. As the captain, ‘Cole’, had already died, he naturally became the commander of these people.

“His ability to hide his aura was actually at such an amazing level.” Mosley was amazed as well. “Not even I was able to notice that he was actually a supreme expert.”

Mosley had been trapped into the same erroneous line of thinking. As he wasn’t able to sense Linley’s Highgod aura, he thus took Linley for someone whose ability to hide his aura was tremendously strong, and therefore as an expert who specialized in soul attacks. “Given his ability to hide his aura, he must be an expert who specializes in soul attacks.”

“Use material attacks to kill him.” Mosley hurriedly ordered those Six Star Fiends.

“Yes!”

The Six Star Fiends immediately acknowledged.

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“Boom!” The terrifying energy wave spread out, and the ten Six Star Fiends located ten kilometers away from Linley instantly were shocked into wakefulness. Not long ago, they had just receive the report from the intelligence agent, and so they have been on high alert this entire time.

“Battle!” Their ten faces all changed.

“Captain.” Melina was frantic.

“Quick, attack!” Shanda let out a low growl, and was the first to fly out, with the other nine Six Star Fiends immediately charging out at high speed as well.

Although they were more than ten kilometers away, to Six Star Fiends, that sort of distance could be traversed in a twinkling.

“Captain, you have to be able to hold.”

The ten Six Star Fiends silently prayed as they moved. To traverse ten kilometers, Six Star Fiends only needed a second. However, a second, in a battle between supreme experts, was enough for many attacks to be exchanged.

When Six Star Fiends or Seven Star Fiends did battle, every thousandth or ten-thousandth of a second, a person could die.

“Material attacks!”

All of the Six Star Fiends, after receiving the order, trusted in Mosley’s judgment. This was because they all knew that in the Four Divine Beasts clan, the clan with the most powerful physical defense was the Black Tortoise clan, while the Azure Dragon clan’s physical defense wasn’t too powerful; only those three famous figures amongst them had truly powerful bodies.

But Linley...

Clearly wasn’t one of those three, nor was he on the list of high-danger individuals that their intelligence reports had provided him. His body shouldn’t be too tough.

Not hesitating at all, the Six Star Fiends all forcibly attempted to resist that gravitational pull while simultaneously attempting to launch their most powerful material attacks. Shattered metallic scraps flew out at high speed from within that Blackstone Space, and a white fog was beginning to spread out.

It was like a phantom, a bizarre illusion...

“Swoosh!” A completely translucent icy awl tore through the air, shooting towards Linley.

“Haaargh!” His clothes exploding, a muscular expert of the Barbary clan brandished a giant icesword, the edge of the icesword gleaming with light. Clutching that giant icesword, he chopped down it with from mid-air in a dominating manner against Linley.

“Crackle!”

One slender icy needle after another shot out, translucent and thin, the size and shape of embroidery needles. If one wasn’t paying special attention to them, one wouldn’t even be able to see them clearly.

Seeing this response from the enemies, the corner of Linley’s lips curved upwards.

“The second one!” Linley flew directly towards the man who was chopping down at him with that icesword, completely ignoring the icy needles shooting at him from behind. With a series of ‘crunch’ ‘crunch’ sounds, the icy needles struck Linley’s draconic scales, then immediately disintegrated, leaving behind just some white residue on the scales.

“Not good.” The Six Star Fiends who were surrounding and attacking Linley couldn’t help but have their faces change in worry.

In particular, that man who was chopping downwards with his icesword. His heart trembled.

“You won’t be able to flee.” A voice rang out in his mind. The Six Star Fiend realized that a pair of dark golden eyes was staring at him. He could sense that astonishing gravitational pull, and knew that he wouldn’t be able to escape. He let out a bellow. “Die!”

The muscular man's face was savage, and as he bellowed, he chopped downwards with full force with his blade.

Where the icesword passed, voids in space appeared. Clearly, those were made from torn rips in space.

“Whoosh!” A blur suddenly came chopping over. He only sensed that the air seemed to tremble, then explode. A draconic tail lashed viciously against his icesword, and the terrifying power of that draconic tail was actually completely focused on the sword.

The muscular man only felt his arms go numb, and the icesword was sent flying away. Immediately afterwards, tears in the palm of his hand appeared, created by the shock of the impact, and blood flowed out.

“You can follow your captain now.” The voice rang out in his mind.

“No!” The muscular man roared angrily, his entire body instantly emitting streams of water that completely surrounded him.

“Whoosh!”

After whipping the icesword aside, Linley's draconic tail whistled through the air as it shot backwards, slashing directly against the muscular man's head. It must be said that Linley's body was simply too powerful, and that his strength was simply too terrifying.

“Bang!” A powerful tremor. The muscular man's head immediately exploded, and a divine spark fell out.

Yet another Six Star Fiend had died!

That group of bandits just stared, slack-jawed, at this scene. Linley's Blackstone Space was made in a way which specially focused his divine earth power against his opponents, and thus didn't have much of an impact on these bandits.

After all, if he drew the bandits over, they'd just get in his way.

The bandits all immediately flew out of the Blackstone Space's range, but the battle that was going on above them caused them to be utterly dazed.

The speed of this battle was too fast!

The power was too terrifying!

“Those are spatial tears. Spatial tears.” One of the bandits, a God, called out numbly like an idiot. Only the material attacks of someone who was at least at the Six Star Fiend level of power was capable of creating spatial tears. These bandits normally would never have a chance to see such a thing.

To the likes of them, creating spatial tears in the Infernal Realm was something out of legends.

“When those icy needles that created spatial tears hit that God, they didn't do anything!” The bandits stared dumbly.

For a body to be able to withstand an attack that could create spatial tears was...too terrifying.

“He...he...” The bandits stared disbelievingly at the Dragonformed Linley.

“That God, we were actually...”

“What ‘God’? He’s an expert. A Six Star Fiend. No, a Seven Star Fiend! A true, supreme expert. He was just hiding his power just now.” The leader of the bandits immediately shouted. “Quick, let’s run farther away and watch from a distance. Let’s not get hit by any shockwaves. In battles like this, the slightest shockwaves can take our lives with ease.”

“Right, right.”

The bandits were completely stunned, and all of them hurriedly ran farther into the distance.

From Linley’s killing of the captain to the execution of the Six Star Fiend, barely any time had actually passed, perhaps just as long as it took for the sparks of a flint to emerge when struck. But that instant had caused the ten-plus enemies to be completely stunned.

“Lord Mosley, his body is very powerful.” The Six Star Fiends hurriedly sent through divine sense.

“We used our full force against him in material attacks, but weren’t able to hurt him at all.”

Just now, Linley had only dodged slightly. Even if a few attacks landed on him, he wasn’t too concerned. He didn’t even fear the material attacks of Seven Star Fiends. How could he fear the material attacks of Six Star Fiends?

“He’s a soul expert, and his material defense is so powerful as well.” Mosley had a bad feeling, but then he made his decision. “Since material attacks are useless, I’ll have to test a soul attack. I want to see if he’ll be able to endure my soul attack.”

Mosley had no other options.

“Soul attacks, en masse!” Mosley gave the order.

Mosley knew that no matter how tough one’s soul was, if one was hit by a large number of soul attacks from many experts, one would still be doomed. This was because when a true expert was dealing with group attacks, the way to successfully deal with them wasn’t to take them all head on, it was to make sure that each time, only a few attacks would actually land.

“The third!” Linley instantly stared at Mosley.

Based on quick reaction from the other side, Linley became certain that this devilish man with serpents hanging from his ears should be a tough opponent.

“Swoosh!” Linley immediately flew over.

Mosley was resisting the gravitational pull; there was no way he could escape Linley’s attack. Mosley didn’t try to escape either; his right palm stretched out, and his eyes shot out with a hazy black light as his lips began to move as he mumbled some strange words.

“Captain!” Right at this moment, Melina and the others flew over at high speed.

Linley felt a surge of jubilation in his heart. His right hand flipped out, and a devilish violet light flashed. Bloodviolet, carrying Linley’s force, chopped directly towards Mosley.

His powerful physical strength, when matched with the Profound Truths of Velocity, caused Bloodviolet’s speed to reach an extreme.

Where the sword passed by, space cracked apart.

Mosley's right palm struck out towards Linley, and instantly, a pitch-black, semi-translucent hand seal shot out towards Linley. Linley's face changed, and at just this moment, the other Six Star Fiends all launched their own soul attacks as well.

"Haaargh." Linley hurriedly changed the direction of his Gravitational Space.

He made gravity pull downwards!

Caught by surprise, those Six Star Fiends couldn't help but drop, and their soul attacks were impacted as well.

"Crunch." The translucent hand seal covered by that black light shot directly into Linley's body. There was no way to block it at all, and Linley himself hurriedly pulled away from the enemy while whole-heartedly focusing on defending against this soul attack.

The black hand burrowed its way into Linley's body, then dug towards Linley's mind.

"Not good." Linley's face changed dramatically.

He immediately flew into the sky, striving to put some distance between him and his opponents, for fear that another attack would come.

"BANG!" When that black hand seal entered his mind, it struck directly against that 'translucent membrane'. It trembled slightly, as though it was about to disperse, but then, strangely enough, the energy of the black hand seal actually spread out, covering Linley's entire consciousness, instantly discovering the weak spot.

Amazingly enough, the dispersed energy then reformed, actually transforming into a needle, piercing directly towards the flaw in the membrane...

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The ‘bandage’ over the flaw in the membrane managed to resist for only a moment before being punctured straight through by that black needle. The black needle entered the most important part of Linley’s mind...the area above his sea of consciousness.

“Rumble...”

The entire sea of consciousness began to swirl, and countless rays of spiritual energy danced about, merged together with that ‘azure light’ and sweeping towards that black needle, which had no place to hide.

“Crackle...” That spiritual energy which glowed with azure light surrounded the black needle and stalemated it, with the two slowly grinding each other down.

Mosley and the other fourteen Six Star Fiends raised their heads, staring at Linley.

“Lord Mosley, what should we do?” They looked at Mosley.

“Keep attacking. His soul defense isn’t exceptionally strong. Otherwise, he wouldn’t need to spend so much time to resist my attack.” Mosley immediately ordered. “Remember. Use soul attacks against him.”

“Yes!”

The experts immediately rushed into the sky.

Linley’s ashen face returned to its normal appearance. At this moment, Melina, Shanda, and the other ten Six Star Fiends of the Azure Dragon clan had gathered here as well.

“Captain, are you alright?” Melina hurriedly asked.

“I’m fine.” Linley shook his head, but in his heart, he still felt a surge of fear. “Luckily, I’ve undergone the Ancestral Baptism, and the primal energy of the Azure Dragon clan intensified and merged with my soul. In the end, I was able to endure it.” The primal energy of the Azure Dragon clan, that azure light, was very unusual. It was capable of fusing with spiritual energy in order to execute their innate divine ability.

At the same time, it could also be used to protect the soul.

“They are attacking.” A member of the squad suddenly said frantically.

Linley lowered his head to stare at the fifteen people flying towards them at high speed. He immediately ordered through divine sense, “That bald, gray-robed man is a Seven Star Fiend who specializes in soul attacks. In a little bit, Shanda, you and the other five who are specialized in material attacks should go deal with him. As for the other four, accompany me in killing the other Six Star Fiends.”

“Captain, just Shanda and the other five? Are they enough?” Melina said with concern.

“Don’t worry. I still have a card up my sleeve I have yet to play.” Linley looked down at the fifteen people charging from below.

The reason he hadn't used his ultimate technique was because his forces hadn't arrived yet. Another reason was that he was afraid that the enemy would panic and immediately flee. This was why he hadn't used that technique...Spiritual Chaos! Spiritual Chaos was a technique which could only be used with the assistance of the 'black stone'.

At Miluo Island, Linley had relied on this technique to force a large number of Highgods to enter a dazed state.

Even Seven Star Fiends would be slightly affected. But when experts did battle, just a slight effect would be enough!

"Eleven of them?" Mosley narrowed his eyes.

"Ignore the others. Kill that leader!" Mosley shouted through divine sense. "When we kill that Seven Star Fiend, we can be considered as having avenged your captain."

"Kill!"

At this time, nobody was going to retreat. Nobody who dared to join their clan's war-squads would cower. Mosley led his fourteen Six Star Fiends in an upwards charge, directly into Linley's 'Blackstone Space'. These fifteen people were clustered together, for fear of being targeted and killed individually.

The fifteen flew together, as though they were one unified body, directly towards Linley.

The ten Six Star Fiends of the Azure Dragon clan were next to Linley as well, and Linley gave the order coolly. "Let's go!" According to their plan, Linley's group of eleven would also charge downwards. After all, the distance between them was less than a few hundred meters.

They would fight in close combat in just a moment!

"Kill!" Linley's side seemed to care not one whit for their own lives.

"Kill!" Mosley's side, as well, seemed to be utterly fearless towards death.

Linley's eyes suddenly flashed and turned cold.

In his sea of consciousness, his spiritual energy, centered around the 'black stone', began to turn, and strange rays of spiritual energy instantly spread out, surrounding the entire Gravitational Space. This 'Spiritual Chaos' effect was immediately applied against those fifteen people.

"Whoooosh."

Mosley's group of fifteen simultaneously heard a very strange, unique wind sound reverberate in their minds. This sort of wind sound caused their minds to uncontrollably feel dazed for a moment. But that moment of being dazed was also the most critical moment in this battle...

"Slash!" "Slash!" "Slash!"

Just like slicing watermelons, more than half of the Six Star Fiends of the Barbary clan who were affected by the 'Spiritual Chaos' were killed. Linley was like a tiger or like a pack of wolves, instantly killing three of the Six Star Fiends.

Shanda and the other five who were specialized in material attacks launched their assaults directly against Mosley.

Mosley just felt his head go slightly dizzy, but his mind was still clear. As a supreme expert who specialized in the soul, this sort of soul effect didn't impact him too much. But when he saw how many people on his side had been killed, he was instantly enraged.

Mosley let out an explosive howl.

A translucent, fan-shaped ripple burst out from Mosley, spreading out towards those six attackers coming from in front of him. Shanda and the other Six Star Fiends only had enough time to unleash a single fierce material attack before they themselves were hit.

The translucent ripple passed through the bodies of Shanda and the other five. Their bodies trembled, and then three of them collapsed from the skies.

The three had died!

“Shanda!” Melina called out frantically.

“Big Brother!” Another squad member, a female one, howled bitterly as well.

Shanda was one of the three who had died.

“Not good.” Watching this from behind, Linley was deeply shocked. “This person was actually unaffected by my Spiritual Chaos technique.” In Miluo Island, he had battled against Seven Star Fiends before, and that time, his opponent had been affected.

However...

Mosley clearly was highly specialized in the soul, and thus his endurance in taking these attacks was greater as well.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

The material attacks which Shanda's group of six had launched had transformed into the shapes of sabers, needles, awls, threads...and all of them shot out towards Mosley. Although Mosley's soul was strong, his material defense was average.

The gravity was too strong. Mosley didn't have enough time to dodge.

“Aaaaaargh!” Mosley let out an angry roar, a deep, rumbling roar.

Immediately, the illusory image of an enormous long, black, coiling serpent appeared behind Mosley. This black serpent naturally emanated a heart-shaking aura. Its entire body was as black as tar. It only had a single eye, and this eye was vertical, as red as blood.

“Slash!” “Slash!”

The material attacks slashed down on Mosley's body. His armor shattered, and his body was cut into. Mosley, knowing that he didn't have enough time to dodge, had focused on allowing the energy attacks to strike non-lethal parts of his body, guaranteeing that his head was undamaged.

This was the problem with material attacks; they weren't like 'soul attacks', which could be aimed at a specific weakness, making it so that there was no real way to protect an 'important part' of the body. Material attacks were generally only effective in close combat.

“Die.” Mosley stared at Linley.

That enormous coiling black serpent behind him also stared at Linley with its solitary, blood-red eye. “Not good.” Linley hurriedly controlled his ‘Blackstone Space’, making the direction of the gravity orient downwards, wanting to impact his opponent.

“Rumble...” A translucent ray of light shot out from the center of Mosley’s forehead, piercing directly towards Linley.

Innate divine ability: ‘Soul Extinguisher’!

“Captain!” The other Six Star Fiends were greatly shocked.

“No time.” The attack of this innate ability was simply too fast. He wasn’t even able to dodge. Linley couldn’t help but just grit his teeth, planning to take it head on.

“Swish!” An arm suddenly appeared in front of Linley, blocking for him just as that translucent ray of light was about to hit him. That translucent ray of light shot directly into the arm. Linley turned to look. Shocked, he said, “Scar [Si’ka’er]!”

Scar, one of the ten Six Star Fiends under Linley’s command. Scar normally was a man of few words, but he had never hesitated with regards to Linley’s orders. Who would have imagined at this moment, Scar would suddenly sacrifice himself to save Linley?

Scar fell directly the skies. “Kill!” At the same time, the other squad members transformed into rays of light, attacking directly towards Mosley’s head.

“Roaaaaaar!” Mosley once more emitted that furious roar.

But before he was able to launch that soul attack yet again, the sound of the air exploding could be heard, and his head transformed into a pile of mud-like flesh as a divine spark flew out.

Mosley, dead!

The world suddenly turned quiet. In mid-air, Linley and the others remained quiet for quite some time. In this battle, they had killed two enemy Seven Star Fiends and twelve Six Star Fiends, with three Six Star Fiends escaping.

“Three still managed to flee.” Melina said unhappily.

“It’s my fault. I didn’t expect that Mosley would be completely unaffected.” Linley said. Although they had killed the vast majority of the enemy’s Six Star Fiends, when Linley and Mosley had been fighting, those remaining Six Star Fiends had known that there was no hope of victory, and so had immediately fled.

“Scar. Thank you.” Linley turned to look at a Six Star Fiend. It was Scar, who had just saved him. Scar himself had a total of three bodies. During this battle, he had left only one divine clone back in Bloodbath Gorge, keeping another one in his body.

Just now, when Mosley had used his innate divine ability, ‘Soul Extinguisher’, Scar had immediately separated his two clones, allowing his divine clone to stretch his arm out and block that attack.

“Captain, it doesn’t matter too much that I lost a divine clone. Seven Star Fiends are the true pillars of our clan. You can’t die.” Scar said.

“When we came, there were eleven of us. Now, three of us have lost our most powerful divine clones.” Linley looked around, then sighed. The three had been killed by Mosley. “It was my miscalculation.”

If Mosley had been affected by the Spiritual Chaos, then Shanda and the others would have been able to kill him.

“Captain, this is already a major victory.”

“Right, a tremendous win!”

“Scar only lost a weak divine clone. It isn’t a huge loss to him. Our only true losses are those three Six Star Fiends. However, today, we actually killed twelve Six Star Fiends, and even Seven Star Fiends.”

“We killed Seven Star Fiends. Two of them! And Captain, you didn’t die yourself. We didn’t lose much.”

“Using my divine clone to trade for the most powerful body of a Seven Star Fiend? Worth it.”

Hearing the words of his squad members, Linley felt slightly calmer. According to the historical accomplishments of his clan in battle, it was indeed a grand victory for their side to only lose three Six Star Fiends while killing so many enemy experts, especially given that there were two Seven Star Fiends amongst them.

“In our battle against the eight great clans, our normal casualty ratio is close to one-to-one. It is quite rare for us to gain a complete victory like this.” Melina hurriedly said.

“Let’s go back.” Linley took a deep sigh.

This was the first time he had engaged in this brutal clan war, and Linley himself felt that this battle was a very brutal one. But he looked at the other squad members. “None of them seem to care that three of our squad members lost their most powerful divine clones. Clearly, they’ve experienced too much.”

Linley thought back to those red lettered names written on the stone pillar outside Squad Thirteen’s residences.

Those names represented dead squad members.

“The war between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans is nothing more than a war of attrition. Many in our clan have died, but the same is true for theirs.” Linley sighed to himself. At the same time, he flew into the air alongside the other seven squad members.

“Captain, your ambush was truly formidable. You immediately killed one of the Seven Star Fiends.”

“Ambush? It was a one use-strategy. In the future, the enemy won’t give us such a good opportunity.” Linley understood that both Mosley as well as the Seven Star Fiend he had killed at the very start would most likely have divine clones back in their base.

By now, the enemy clan was definitely aware of his ambush.

From today onwards, the enemy squads would definitely be very vigilant against enemy Gods. They wouldn’t be caught off-guard again.

In the distant mountain forests, a group of bandits watched as Linley’s squad flew away. For a long, long moment, they remained speechless and terrified.

“Leader, what was that enormous black serpent just now? It was so terrifying.”

“That was the innate divine ability of a divine beast. I’ve seen a divine beast use an innate divine ability before. However, compared to what we just saw...that great black serpent was thousands of times more terrifying. The aura of it alone made me feel as though I couldn’t breathe.”

The battle just now had utterly terrified these God-level bandits.

“And we actually had dared to try and rob that supreme expert...” The bandits were overcome with endless regret. After having witnessed this battle, they knew that for Linley, killing them was something that could be accomplished in the blink of an eye.

Most likely, this memory would remain with them for the rest of their lives.

They would never forget that they once tried to waylay a supreme expert.

Linley led his squad of seven, quietly sneaking back towards the Skyrite Mountains. They were very careful on the way back, afraid that the eight great clans might discover them. After flying for a long time, Linley’s group finally arrived at the Skyrite Mountains.

They flew directly to the air above the Skyrite Mountains.

“Why are there so many people?” Linley stared in astonishment. There were quite a few people in the air above Bloodbath Gorge, with the leader of the group including the Patriarch, the Grand Elder, and some others. Patriarch Gislason currently had a hint of a smile on his face.

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Bestowal

Above Bloodbath Gorge, at the edges of the cliff. A large group of people was standing here, with the leader being the Patriarch and the Grand Elder.

“What are they doing here?” Linley was somewhat puzzled.

Linley immediately flew over, but before he even had the chance to salute, the Patriarch, ‘Gislason’, laughed and said, “Welcome back, Linley!” By the side of the Patriarch was the Grand Elder, dressed in a long black robe and wearing that silver mask.

“Well done, Linley.” The Grand Elder spoke as well.

“Linley, quite impressive. You killed two Seven Star Fiends. Admirable, admirable!” The nearby Elder Garvey laughed loudly as well.

“Elder Linley’s very first act is so impressive.” The golden-haired Elder, ‘Forhan’, laughed brightly as well.

Faced with the praise of the Patriarch and this group of Elders, Linley was rather stupefied. “My clones as well as clones of the other squad members left behind in Bloodbath Gorge haven’t gone to inform the Patriarch or the Grand Elder of this matter yet.”

Because the trip back wasn’t too long of a trip, Linley had been planning to make the report upon returning.

Who would have imagined that the Patriarch and the Grand Elder already knew about it?

What he didn’t know...was that this sort of wonderful news pertaining to their clansmen would also be very quickly reported back to the Four Divine Beasts clan by their intelligence agents.

“Enough. Everyone, don’t just stand here. Come. I’ve already ordered for a grand banquet to be prepared for celebration.” Gislason laughed loudly, then looked at Linley. “Linley, come, walk with me.”

Linley immediately flew over.

Gislason slapped Linley on the shoulders, his face wreathed in smiles. “Well done.”

“Just luck.” Linley immediately said. If he had fought them head on, those two Seven Star Fiends definitely would have been stronger than him. Thus, he succeeded only because he suddenly killed one, and then gathered his forces to join together to kill the other one.

“Why so humble?” Gislason laughed.

“This time, I really was quite worried about him. I didn’t expect that the mission would be completed even more perfectly than I could have hoped for.” The Grand Elder said.

Immediately, Gislason, the Grand Elder, and Linley flew together in front of that group of Elders, as well as the lucky survivors of Squad Thirteen, straight into the depths of the Skyrite Mountains. After a long time, Linley’s group arrived at a lavishly, gray crystal palace.

Quite a few maidservants of the clan were carrying platters in a steady stream into the palace.

The palace was very wide, and it was tens of meters high as well. Within the palace, there were nine stone pillars that were holding the ceiling up. The Patriarch and the Grand Elder flew straight to the front of the palace, then sat down together. In the clan, the status of the Patriarch was just slightly higher than that of the Grand Elder.

However, in the clan, the Patriarch and the Grand Elder were considered the highest level figures, while the other Elders were subordinate to them.

“All of you, take your seats.” Patriarch ‘Gislason’ waved his hand and laughed.

“Linley, you can take the seat of honor to the left.” Gislason pointed to a seat, then laughed. “After all, today’s celebratory banquet is held in your honor.”

“Me?” Linley was stunned.

There were quite a few Elders more powerful than him, and his record of accomplishments was still quite low.

“Linley, since the Patriarch told you to sit, then sit!” A silver-haired, cold-faced youth walked over, a rare smile on his face.

“Elder Blue.” Linley nodded, then sat.

As for this Elder Blue, he sat down directly next to Linley, in the secondary seat of honor on the left. Nobody dared say anything when he took this spot. After all, this Elder Blue was the clan’s ‘Genius Elder’!

According to legend, his power was only inferior to that of the Patriarch and the Grand Elder, and was vastly superior to that of the other Elders. One of the three ‘trump cards’ of the clan!

In addition, when their ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’ was still alive, he doted dearly on Blue, and had spent a large amount of effort to strengthen Blue’s body, making Blue’s body extremely powerful.

“Our Four Divine Beasts clan has battled with the eight great clans for ten thousand years, but such major victories have been very rare.” Seated at the front of the palace, Gislason let out a sigh. Normally speaking, if one side felt they would be unable to win, they would immediately flee.

To kill a Seven Star Fiend who was trying to flee was very difficult. Killing two Seven Star Fiends in a row, with one’s own side suffering only minimal losses, was extremely rare.

“It’s rare to have such a magnificent victory. If we can kill two of their Seven Star Fiends every time, no matter how many experts the eight great clans have, they won’t be able to last against us.” Immediately, some Elders began to laugh.

The entire palace became filled with the sound of laughter.

“Linley, what is it?” Blue, seated next to Linley, realized that Linley wasn’t laughing.

“I’m fine. I’m just thinking about Elder Arhaus, and the sacrifices of the many other Elders.” Linley sighed softly.

Immediately, quite a few Elders in the hall fell silent.

Over the past ten thousand years of nonstop battle, when they had slaughtered the enemy Seven Star Fiends, their own side's experts had been steadily dwindling as well. Six Star Fiends died in entire batches. The foundation of power which the clan had built up over countless hundreds of millions of years was being steadily whittled away.

"What sort of attitude is this, all of you!" The Grand Elder barked.

Everyone couldn't help but look at the Grand Elder.

The Grand Elder said coldly, "Even if our entire Four Divine Beasts clan dies out, we won't permit those eight clowns to besmirch the reputation of our clan! When our ancestors were present, did those eight great clans dare to resist us? But now that the ancestor is dead, they'll come for revenge? Hmph. How can clowns like these possibly make our Four Divine Beasts clan submit?"

"For the sake of the clan, so what if we die?" Elder Blue said arrogantly as well.

"For the sake of the clan!"

Linley, too, could sense the arrogance and pride of the many Elders in the palace. That they would rather die than submit.

As they saying goes, better to be a shattered piece of jade than an undamaged tile of brick!

"For the sake of the clan?" Linley said quietly in his heart. When he was young, Linley had always wanted to retrieve the ancestral heirloom of the Baruch clan, the warblade 'Slaughterer'. Linley had a deep sense of belonging towards the Baruch clan.

Nowadays, although he had joined the Azure Dragon clan and met countless clansmen who had the same draconic lineage as he did, and thus had a sense of belonging...

...Linley still couldn't completely understand that sort of pride and arrogance.

If Linley was in control of the clan, he probably would have his clansmen all hide themselves within the Skyrise Mountains and wait for the day when they had a 90% chance of success in gaining revenge before going and battling with the enemy.

"Perhaps...it's because I never experienced the glory days of the Four Divine Beasts clan." Linley said to himself.

The arrogance of the Four Divine Beasts clan came from countless years of being mighty. Countless years of glory. The illustriousness of the clan had long ago been embedded in the hearts of every single Elder.

"Enough." Gislason laughed loudly. "Just look at those looks on your faces. Today is a day of celebration. Why are we all discussing those things? Come, let's have a toast. Enough of that topic. Today, let's just drink to our heart's content and have a good celebration, a celebration for Linley's victory!"

"Yes, let's celebrate!" All of the Elders raised their wine glasses while looking towards Linley.

Linley couldn't help but feel the blood boiling in his veins. He, too, raised his glass, and each and every single member of Squad Thirteen, seated at the margins of the palace, all raised their cups as well.

"Cheers!" Gislason said brightly.

"Cheers!"

Everyone in the palace replied, and they all downed their wine in one gulp.

During this banquet, nobody else raised any dispiriting matters. There had been far too many brutal, vicious happenings over the past few years. A good celebration was long past overdue. But this sort of happiness only made Linley feel all the more aware of the dreary sadness hidden behind this formerly unsurpassably powerful Four Divine Beasts clan!

The dreary desolateness of an ancient clan which had fallen.

But although they had fallen, the clan still had their pride! Even in the face of despair, they wouldn't compromise at all! Anybody who wanted to attack the clan in their moment of weakness would have to pay an enormous price as well!

The celebratory mood of the banquet finally came to an end, and each of the Elders left. Linley and the members of Squad Thirteen were about to leave as well.

"Linley. Stay." The voice of the Patriarch came from the front of the palace.

Linley couldn't help but feel puzzled, but he immediately instructed the members of Squad Thirteen, "You can go back first."

"Yes, Captain." Melina and the others all flew back.

Linley returned to the palace. The many platters within the palace were currently being taken away by the serving maids at high speed. Patriarch Gislason walked down from his position at the front of the palace, then instructed, "Linley, let's chat inside."

"Yes, Patriarch."

Linley followed Gislason into a side room next to the palace.

The side room wasn't very large. After Linley walked into it, he only heard a 'squeak' as the door actually closed automatically.

"Sit." A hint of a smile was on Gislason's face.

Linley sat down, then asked, "Patriarch, is there something you need?"

"I made you an Elder, but I didn't expect that during the Conclave of Elders, they would actually have you go to Bloodbath Gorge. By the time I found out about it, I couldn't order you to come back." Gislason sighed. "You are only a God. It isn't very appropriate to have you in Bloodbath Gorge."

Gislason valued Linley very highly. One reason was because of Linley's connection to his father, the 'Azure Dragon', while the other reason was because of the power which Linley had displayed.

"I originally thought that my younger sister wouldn't give you any assignments, but who would've thought that she did?" Gislason continued.

"The other Elders are all fighting on behalf of the clan. How can I be an exception?" Linley said.

Gislason's eyes lit up. Laughing, he nodded. "Actually, my younger sister and I were both mistaken about each other. I had thought...that my younger sister wouldn't send you to do battle. But my younger sister thought...that I had already given you Sovereign's Might, and so you would be able to protect yourself. That's why she sent you off."

“Sovereign’s Might?” Linley said, puzzled.

“Right.”

Gislason nodded as he spoke. “Generally speaking, anyone who can become an Elder of our Four Divine Beasts clan would soon afterwards be bestowed a drop of Sovereign’s Might. But there must be an explanation given for this bestowal of Sovereign’s Might. You have to have accomplished some sort of meritorious deed, at least. That matter between you and Emanuel? That was just causing trouble. Although you became an Elder, it wasn’t appropriate for me to bestow a Sovereign’s Might upon you right away.”

“But this time, you can be considered to have rendered great merits.”

With a flip of his hand, Gislason revealed a drop of azure ‘water’. Contained within that azure water drop was a power that made one’s heart tremble.

“Today, I bestow upon you this drop of water-type Sovereign’s Might.” Gislason said. As he spoke, the drop of Sovereign’s Might floated towards Linley. Linley, watching that drop of Sovereign’s Might float towards him, was utterly stunned.

Bestowing Sovereign’s Might to him?

He himself already had two drops. But of course, at a time like this, Linley couldn’t refuse.

“Thank you, Patriarch.” Linley hurriedly stretched his hand out, accepting this drop of Sovereign’s Might.

Gislason laughed and nodded. “Now that you have a drop of Sovereign’s Might, even if you run into some sort of critically dangerous situation, you’ll be able to stay alive. But Linley, unless the situation is truly critical, you cannot waste this drop of Sovereign’s Might. If you are forced to use it, you need to wipe out the enemy.”

Linley lowered his head to look at the drop of Sovereign’s Might.

This was a drop of the power of a Sovereign, but could it truly be used to save his life? Would it be able to defend against the soul attacks of others? Linley still clearly remembered that scene of how that Mosley executed his innate divine ability.

“Patriarch, can it be that Sovereign’s Might can be used to defend against soul attacks?” Linley hurriedly asked.

As Linley saw it, a Sovereign’s power should be to a Sovereign what divine power was to a Deity. It shouldn’t have much to do with the soul.

“Of course it can.” Gislason laughed.

“How?” Linley said, puzzled. “It shouldn’t be possible for ordinary material force to block soul attacks, right?”

Gislason laughed even harder. “Linley, are you under the impression that a Sovereign’s power is just the ‘advanced’ version of ‘divine power’?”

“Isn’t it?” Linley said, puzzled.

“Wrong.” Gislason shook his head. “Sovereign’s Might is very unique. For example...it can actually strengthen our bodies.”

Gislason took a deep breath, then said seriously, “Linley, that year, my father explained to me that after he became a Sovereign...his body only contained a single type of energy. Sovereign power!”

“What do you mean?” Linley said, puzzled. “Of course a Sovereign would have Sovereign power.”

“What I mean is...Sovereign’s don’t even have spiritual energy!” Gislason said.

“Wha?!” Linley was stupefied.

The soul was a person’s foundation. Anyone who had a soul would naturally have spiritual energy.

“Or, to be more precise, Sovereign power is the same as spiritual energy!” Gislason laughed. “Thus, Sovereign’s Might is capable of not just being a material energy source, it can also be used as an energy source for the soul.”

“Ah!?” Linley was shocked.

“You can rely on it to unleash material attacks, but you can also use it to unleash soul attacks. Naturally, you can also rely on it to block against soul attacks.” Gislason said.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 28, Freedom

In the past, Linley had known very little regarding Sovereign's Might. Thus, he had taken it for an advanced form of 'divine power'. But now, it seemed, it was completely different. Sovereign's Might was actually capable of being used like spiritual energy.

"Sovereign's Might also has one other benefit." Gislason laughed. "When you use Sovereign's Might, for a short moment, both your body and your soul will be uplifted."

"Eh?" Linley was surprised.

"This is the truth." Gislason sighed. "However, the amount of uplifting isn't very great. If one was willing to be wasteful and consecutively use hundreds of drops of Sovereign's Might, both the soul and the body will be tremendously transformed."

"Hundreds of drops? Who has that many?" Linley laughed.

"Even if someone does have that many, they wouldn't be willing to waste it like that." Gislason said.

"Our Four Divine Beasts clan's one and only advantage over the eight great clans is that we have quite a bit of Sovereign's Might." Gislason sighed. "By relying on Sovereign's Might, we are able to be at the level where even when under group assault, we can still fight back. This is the only reason why we've been able to keep the death ratio at one-to-one."

Linley nodded. After this recent experience, Linley realized how powerful the enemy was.

For example, Mosley's innate divine ability truly was terrifying.

"Now that our ancestors have died, the more Sovereign's Might we use up, the less we have." Gislason warned. "Linley, you cannot waste this Sovereign's Might. Unless the situation is critical, using it simply isn't worth it."

"Yes, Patriarch." Linley replied.

Even the Four Divine Beasts clan had a dwindling stockpile of Sovereign's Might.

"Enough. You can go back for now. In the upcoming period of time, my younger sister shouldn't assign you any more missions. After all, after this experience, the eight great clans will be very much on their guard against you. In the future, it won't be so easy for you to kill two Seven Star Fiends." Gislason laughed.

Linley nodded, then immediately left.

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Indigo Prefecture, the eastern borders. Four of the eight great clans were located here, amongst them the Barbary clan which had moved here from the Divine Water Plane.

Deep within a dark estate, a giant was standing within a flower garden.

He was 3.5 meters tall, and his face was covered with a green beard, each hair looking like a steel needle. He was dressed in a plain, unadorned set of armor, and on his shoulders, there was a black, serpent-patterned cloak attached. This person was staring directly at Cole, who was standing before him.

“Cole, you were killed without even being able to fight back?” The giant said, frowning.

“Patriarch, I, I didn’t expect...” Cole’s face was filled with rage. “He clearly was just a God, but who would have imagined that he was just hiding his aura? When he was very close to me, he suddenly ambushed me...I didn’t have any chance to react at all.”

Currently, Cole only had his divine wind clone remaining.

“Not just me. Even Mosley wasn’t able to detect that this person was hiding his aura.” Cole said hurriedly.

This Patriarch of the Barbary clan frowned even more deeply.

“Patriarch, based on what the clones of my subordinates told me, the person who killed me didn’t have an extremely powerful soul defense.” Cole said hurriedly.

“Eh?”

The Barbary clan’s Patriarch couldn’t help but grow puzzled. He swept his gaze towards the outside of the garden, and instantly, a black shadow flitted in from outside, standing there respectfully.

“Quickly go investigate if there is a new Elder within the Azure Dragon clan who is skilled at hiding his power.” The Patriarch of the Barbary clan instructed.

“Yes, Elder.”

The black shadow vanished once more.

.....

After having completed the last mission, the Grand Elder wouldn’t possibly send Linley into battle once more in the near term. Thus, Linley rejoined Bebe, Delia, Cesar, and the others in the gorge, enjoying some rare, peaceful days.

More than two years had passed since the last assignment. In the past two years, not many things happened. On this day, Linley and Delia were currently eating some food together.

“Delia, she...seems to have something she wants to say.” Linley laughed to himself. Today, Delia was very absent-minded as she ate, as though she wanted to say something but didn’t.

“Linley.” Delia hesitated a long time, then finally spoke.

Linley chuckled. He had been waiting a long time for her to speak. “Delia, what is it?”

Delia paused a moment, then said, “Linley, we’ve been here in the Skyrise Mountains for quite some time. It’s been eighty years now, right?”

“Right.” Linley nodded. “What of it?”

“Linley, we rushed all the way here to Indigo Prefecture, then entered the Skyrise Mountains. Right, we’ve returned to your clan, but...are we just going to stay in the Skyrise Mountains forever?” Delia asked him instead.

Linley couldn't help but frown. "Delia, you want to leave? You want to depart from the Skyrite Mountains?" Linley felt this came out of nowhere.

"No, that's not what I mean." Delia said hurriedly. "Actually, I want to follow the forces of the clan to go on a trip to the cities."

"No." Linley refused decisively. "It's too dangerous. No."

"It's not dangerous." Delia said hurriedly. "In fact, it's not just me. Bebe, Dylin, and the others all want to go on a trip outside. Linley, we've been in this same place without going anywhere else this entire time. It's not as bad for you. You can train and you can go battle. But the rest of us are just here in this gorge every day. After a long period of time, we all feel rather stifled."

Linley was stunned.

He understood what Delia meant. To be in a single place with no contact with the outside world...it wouldn't be so bad at first, but after more time passed, one would feel terribly depressed. If a very long period of time passed...one would be accustomed to being depressed and lonely, at which point one's very temperament would change.

Delia, in particular, had accompanied Linley on their long journey over here. Her heart, like his, was a free one, which couldn't endure this sort of restrictions.

"Delia, I understand your feelings." Linley nodded.

In the past, when he had entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for training for three years, he only had Bebe by his side for those three years. That sort of solitary, lonely life was indeed quite stifling. He himself had only been able to hold on and persevere because of his hatred, which had let him endure it all.

"Delia, I'm sorry." Linley reached out to take Delia's hand.

At this moment, Linley came to a realization.

He had been too selfish!

He always thought of things from his own viewpoint. He wanted to return to his clan. He wanted to battle in Bloodbath Gorge for the clan. But he hadn't considered the situation from Delia and Bebe's viewpoints. He himself could live a very exciting life. But what about them?

Always in their little gorge, living a leisurely, dull life. Bebe was the lively sort, and Delia enjoyed her freedom as well. Linley himself liked an exciting, lively life. Nobody liked to live a flavorless, boring life. He had completely neglected Delia and Bebe.

Thinking of this, Linley couldn't refrain from saying, "Delia, I truly am sorry."

"Say no more." Delia laughed and shook her head. "It's fine. I just want to go for a slight change in atmosphere. Once I'm in a better mood, I'll be fine."

"I want you to go out and relax as well. Only, it really is very dangerous." Linley said nervously.

"Linley, it really isn't dangerous." Delia said hurriedly. "Actually, the Azure Dragon clan has quite a few clansmen who often go to the nearby cities to go sightseeing and shopping. It truly isn't dangerous."

"It isn't dangerous?" Linley didn't understand.

“Linley, if you don’t believe me, you can ask the other Elders.” Delia immediately said.

“Oh?” Linley nodded. “How about this. Delia, you wait here. I’ll go ask the other Elders. If there really isn’t much danger, I’ll let you go.” Linley didn’t want his wife to be too stifled either.

Linley immediately flew up through Dragon Avenue, constantly pondering in his mind Delia’s words. The more he thought of it, the more he felt that he had neglected Delia, Bebe, and the others. They had all accompanied him to the Skyrise Mountains.

But in the end?

They had to stay in that gorge and didn’t dare to leave it at all. This sort of life, akin to living in a prison...was this what he had to offer for Delia and Bebe?

From afar, through the corner of his eyes, Linley saw a person flying in the air. It was the familiar figure of ‘Elder Garvey’. He hurriedly shouted, “Elder Garvey.”

Puzzled, Elder Garvey turned to look, then laughed and flew over. “Linley, what a coincidence.” Linley laughed, “Elder Garvey, there’s something important I want to ask you about. Come, let’s chat over there.”

Linley and Garvey flew together to a nearby location halfway up the mountain.

“Linley, what is it?” Garvey asked, puzzled.

“Our clan often has people who go to the cities?” Linley asked.

“Oh. Yes, we do, actually.” Garvey laughed. “First of all, our clan needs to buy some things on occasion. Secondly, our clansmen are always trapped here within the Skyrise Mountains. Quite a few of them can’t stand this type of restriction, and so they’ll go out to improve their mood. However, each time, the number of people permitted to leave is limited.”

“Is it dangerous?” Linley asked.

“There’s not much danger.” Garvey laughed. “In the past ten thousand years, there hasn’t been a single incident.”

“Aren’t we in a state of war against the eight great clans? How can it be that our clansmen are in no danger when heading out?” Linley didn’t understand.

“Linley, think about how vast the Infernal Realm is. Do you think running into someone is a simple matter? The battles which occur between us and the eight great clans occur because both of us are consciously seeking them out. It’s only because they travel on predetermined routes and because we have intelligence agents constantly monitoring those routes that we are able to so easily run into them.”

Linley nodded.

“As for our clan, when a group of us ride a single metallic lifeform and go to a city, there’s no way we can be on a predetermined route.” Garvey said. “This world is incomparably vast, and we can go anywhere we please. In addition, on our way over, even if the eight great clans see a metallic lifeform, there’s no way they would know that it belongs to our Azure Dragon clan.”

Linley began to understand.

“More important, they can’t send Seven Star Fiends just running around randomly everywhere. Even if an intelligence agent of theirs discovers that we are aboard a metallic lifeform, the metallic lifeform will

quickly fly off into the distance, and because the route is not predetermined, there's no way the enemy can possibly guess where the metallic lifeform has flown to." Garvey laughed.

Linley nodded to himself as well.

The chances of both being encountered as well as being recognized really was one in a hundred million.

"Most importantly of all...each time our clansmen go a group, an Elder will be the escort." Garvey laughed. "This to guard against any unforeseen circumstances. If we really are so unlucky as to encounter an enemy Seven Star Fiend within this vast area, then we'll just have to engage in battle."

Linley, hearing this, felt relieved.

The chances of being encountered really were too low. It was virtually impossible, in fact. And even if there was an encounter...his side had a Seven Star Fiend on guard.

"What, do you have family or friends who want to go out and relax?" Garvey asked.

"Right." Linley suddenly thought of the limitations Garvey had mentioned with respect to how many people could participate. "How many people can go each time?"

"Five hundred people per trip." Garvey nodded. "Don't worry. As an Elder, it will be very simple for you to arrange some family and friends to be included. In addition, if you really are worried, you can escort them yourself as well. If a problem occurred even when two Elders are escorting, that would truly be quite bizarre, wouldn't it?"

Linley's eyes lit up.

Linley himself was interested in accompanying Delia into the city for a nice stroll. "The Elders of Bloodbath Gorge are cyclically assigned to missions. I'm not doing anything right now anyhow." Linley immediately flew back towards Bloodbath Gorge and asked to meet with the Grand Elder.

In the Azure Dragon Palace, the Grand Elder stared at Linley through her mask.

"What? You want to go out?" The Grand Elder said coldly.

"Grand Elder, I just want to accompany our clansmen on a trip to the city." Linley said.

"I can't permit it right now." The Grand Elder shook her head. "Recently, the battle between us and the eight great clans has been fairly fierce. I might need to send you out on a mission at a moment's notice. Linley, the clan is more important. After your thousand years are up and you retire from Bloodbath Gorge, you can go where you please."

Linley was stunned.

He, too, knew that the battles had been very fierce, but he hadn't been sent on a mission in the past two years, after all. Going to a city was a trip of just a few months.

"For now, stay within the Skyrite Mountains. Based on how our intelligence reports develop, I might have a mission for you very soon." The Grand Elder said.

"Yes, Grand Elder."

Linley didn't particularly want to go visit the city himself anyways. The only reason he wanted to go was to protect Delia better.

“It’s within an area of a trillion square kilometers...and why would a Seven Star Fiend be so bored as to just wander about randomly? And the chances of them recognizing that this was a group of our clansmen? And also being to defeat one of my clan’s Elders?” Linley considered it, then set his mind at ease.

The chances of something going wrong were virtually zero!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 29,

Joining Forces

Deep within the Skyrite Mountains. An enormous metallic lifeform in the shape of a black phoenix was hovering there. The giant metallic lifeform was like a little mountain hovering in the skies. Currently, quite a few people were entering into this metallic lifeform.

In the cliffs beneath the metallic lifeform, there was a large group of people who were travelling together, sending off their family and friends.

Amongst them were Tarosse, Dylin, O'Brien, Bebe, Delia, and others, all of whom were standing next to Linley.

"Tarosse, Dylin, Olivier. Be careful in your travels. After you arrive at the city of Meer [Mi'er], whenever you have a chance, you have to come visit. I'll miss you all very much." Linley looked at these people and laughed. After he returned and told Delia that they could go to the cities, Linley came to understand...

That although Delia and Bebe were just going for a visit and would come back, Tarosse, Dylin, Cesar, and the others were preparing to immigrate to that city.

"Definitely!" Dylin said very apologetically. "Linley, actually, we originally wanted to stay here at your place, but the control and supervision within the Skyrite Mountains is very strict, and we also aren't members of your clan, so we normally aren't even allowed to leave the gorge and wander around. So..."

"I understand. Say no more." Linley laughed.

In his heart, he couldn't help but sigh.

Due to the struggle with the eight great clans, the Four Divine Beasts clan, to guard against the possibility of spies entering, was always very strict. Unless there was a special circumstance, the clansmen weren't permitted to wander about freely. As for Tarosse and Dylin, they weren't even members of the clan, so the patrolling warriors kept an even tighter watch on them.

Tarosse and the others had nothing to do, yet they couldn't wander about either. Naturally, it was like sitting in prison for them.

"It was my fault for being inconsiderate." Linley said apologetically.

"Linley, don't say that." Tarosse said hurriedly. In their hearts, Linley had saved their lives, and so they were filled with gratitude towards Linley. "Linley, in the future, when you have time, you need to come to Meer City to visit us."

"Definitely." Linley nodded.

"Then we'll head out for now."

Tarosse, Cesar, Olivier, Dylin and his children...these people bade farewell to Linley, then flew towards the distant metallic lifeform. As for Delia and Bebe, they remained by Linley's side.

"Linley." Delia looked towards Linley.

Linley smiled as he looked at Delia. He couldn't help but give her a hug, then said gently, "Safe journeys."

Delia couldn't help but feel a warm feeling surge in her heart. Nestling into Linley's arms, she acknowledged softly, and then lifted her head up to look at Linley. "Linley, don't worry about me. I won't be in any danger. It's you who I worry about. The battle between our clan and the eight great clans is so fierce. When you fight for your clan, you need to remember...that I'm waiting for you."

Linley stared at his Delia.

"Don't worry. Your husband is quite strong." Linley laughed.

"Narcissist." Delia laughed as well.

"Oh man, I refuse to watch this any longer. I'm leaving." Bebe suddenly called out.

Linley couldn't help but glance sideways at Bebe, who just grinned wickedly.

"Alright. Delia, Bebe, safe journeys. I've already had a chat with the Elder who is in charge of escorting you on this trip." Linley said. Delia and Bebe nodded, then bade Linley farewell as they too flew towards the metallic lifeform in the air.

Linley raised his head, staring at the enormous metallic lifeform begin to move. In but an instant, it turned into a blur, disappearing into the horizon.

He loved her, but he couldn't forcibly detain her. Everyone needed their own space.

Linley turned and headed back towards Bloodbath Gorge. Halfway there, however, Linley saw clearly those many roving patrol soldiers, all of whom had stern looks on their faces as they cautiously kept watch on every place.

"The atmosphere within the clan really is too tense. These soldiers are always on patrol, for fear that a spy might slip in." Linley sighed.

No wonder Tarosse and Dylin were unable to stay here, within this extremely tense atmosphere.

"It's not their fault. After all, the clan is currently in a state of crisis. Who knows if we'll be able to last another ten thousand years." Linley knew very well that although he was able to kill two of their Seven Star Fiends, the enemy was also capable of killing two of his side's Seven Star Fiends.

A constant, never-ending battle.

After ten thousand years, what would be the situation for the Four Divine Beasts clan?

Within that large quiet gorge in the Skyrite Mountains. Linley was currently in his study, flipping through some books that introduced various places of the Infernal Realm. Linley suddenly closed the book, looking through the window to the outside world. "Delia's group has been gone for over a month now. But I keep on having this restless feeling in my heart."

Linley shook his head. "I'm just thinking too much."

Based on the distance between Meer City and the Skyrite Mountains, a roundtrip would take three or four months. There was still quite some time before Delia would return. Even if they encountered any danger, the intelligence agents would definitely send the news back as well.

“This gorge is actually one of the most peaceful places in the entire Skyrise Mountains.” Through the window, Linley looked towards the distant grass. The descendants of the Yulan branch were all gathered there, chatting and laughing, seeming very leisurely.

The reason they were blissful was because they were ignorant!

They didn’t know what sort of crisis the clan was currently facing, and the clan wasn’t planning to inform these Demigods and Gods of the real situation. As for the Highgods who knew what the clan’s situation as, they were all worrying and training hard.

They all wanted to enter Bloodbath Gorge and battle for the sake of the clan!

“Elder Linley.” Suddenly, a voice rang out from outside.

“Enter.” Linley frowned. The person was dressed in a blood-red robe, the uniform of a Bloodbath Gorge warrior.

Someone had been sent from Bloodbath Gorge?

“What is it?” Linley asked.

“Elder Linley, the Grand Elder has ordered that you make haste to the Azure Dragon Palace.” The blood-robed warrior said respectfully.

“The Grand Elder is summoning me?” Linley immediately stood up. Not saying another word, he immediately flew outside.

The blood-robed warrior followed close behind Linley as well. The two of them immediately flew into the skies, out of the gorge. Linley’s departure, in turn, attracted the attention of quite a few people in the gorge.

“Whooooosh.” The cold wind howled, slicing against them like knives of ice.

In Bloodbath Gorge, Six Star Fiend were clustered together in groups of three or five, while occasionally, a Seven Star Fiend could be seen. Linley’s face was emotionless. He was hurrying towards the Azure Dragon Palace at high speed. Upon entering it, he immediately headed to the fifth floor.

Linley swept the fifth floor with his gaze. Within this hall of the Azure Dragon Palace, there was the Grand Elder, dressed in that long black robe and with her face covered with that silver mask, who was seated on her throne. But in the main hall, aside from the Grand Elder, there was one more person...

The balding Elder Emanuel.

Elder Emanuel was currently standing to one side respectfully. Upon seeing him, Linley couldn’t help but feel puzzled. “He’s here also?”

“Elder Linley.” Emanuel smiled towards Linley.

“Elder Emanuel.” Linley greeted him as well, then saluted respectfully. “Grand Elder!”

The Grand Elder, seated up above, said calmly, “Linley, in the war between our Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans, the eight great clans will occasionally send people out on predetermined routes, letting us attack them. Generally speaking, the attacking side has a slight advantage.”

Linley nodded.

Attacking out of ambush could catch someone off-guard. Naturally, they had an advantage.

“How can our Four Divine Beasts clan always engage in this sort of sneak attack?” The Grand Elder said coldly. “Thus, our Four Divine Beasts clan will often send our own squads out on predetermined routes, to await the attacks from our enemies.”

Linley sighed to himself.

He knew that the clan did this. Originally, Arhaus had led his squad out on a predetermined line to await the attacks of the enemy. That time...Arhaus had engaged in a fierce battle with the enemy, with the result being that Arhaus' most powerful divine clone had been killed.

“Once again, it is because of the ‘glory’ of the clan!” Linley sighed to himself.

The Four Divine Beasts clan, for the glory of the clan, wouldn't even deign to always engage in sneak attacks. One could imagine how arrogant they were!

“This time, I was planning to just send Emanuel to lead the squad out on the predetermined route.” The Grand Elder said. “However, this is Emanuel's first assignment, and he himself isn't confident...so he recommended you to me.”

Linley was startled.

What was this supposed to mean? The assignment tasked to Emanuel, Emanuel could shift to someone else?

“Grand Elder, he ‘recommended me’? What does that mean?” Linley said, rather irritated. At the same time, he couldn't help but glance sideways at Emanuel.

Emanuel hurriedly laughed, “Linley, I know that you are very powerful, and so...I recommended that the Grand Elder allow you to accompany me on this assignment.”

“Together?” Linley was stunned.

The Grand Elder nodded. “Right. Normally, when our squads are on assignment, we have one Elder leading each squad. Only occasionally will we send two. This time, I want you to accompany Emanuel.”

Linley glanced at Emanuel. He couldn't help but feel a hint of dissatisfaction in his heart.

After all, this was supposed to be Emanuel's mission.

“Linley, it's been two years since you've been out on a mission. It's about time for you to have one anyhow.” The Grand Elder said.

Linley felt a surge of resignation. Going out to fight wasn't the issue. It was that this mission had come in a very unfair manner.

“What, you aren't willing?” The Grand Elder asked.

Emanuel sighed emotionally, “Linley, if you aren't willing to accompany me, then I'll go by myself to do battle. Even if I'm alone, I won't let the forces of the eight great clans have an easy time of it. If push comes to shove, I'll just lose my divine water clone.”

Linley glanced sideways at Emanuel.

At a time like this, how could he refuse?

“Grand Elder, I’m willing to go.” Linley said.

Emanuel’s eyes lit up, and a smile unconsciously crept onto his face.

“Grand Elder, there’s one thing.” Linley said.

“Speak.” The Grand Elder said.

Linley said respectfully, “Grand Elder, when our clan normally has an assignment, we just send out a single squad, with just a single Seven Star Fiend. I was hoping...that on this mission, we can put on a façade.”

“Façade?” The Grand Elder stared at Linley, puzzled. “Linley, after their last experience, I imagine the experts of the eight great clans won’t be so incautious as to let a God draw near again.”

Linley chuckled. That sort of trick was a one-use trick only.

“Grand Elder, what I mean to say is, Elder Emanuel and his squad should ride their metallic lifeform forward, while I will take just a single Highgod with me. The two of us, by ourselves, will ride on a metallic lifeform, pretending to be ordinary travelers.”

Linley laughed. “A Highgod travelling with a God in the Infernal Realm is very common. It won’t arouse the suspicion of the enemy intelligence agents.”

“Oh?” The Grand Elder was beginning to understand.

“Elder Emanuel will be in the front, while I will be behind. We’ll maintain some distance between the two of us. The enemies will believe that Elder Emanuel is there by himself, and so they’ll send less people over. Once they attack Elder Emanuel, I’ll be able to catch them off-guard.” Linley laughed.

Elder Emanuel’s face had become rather ugly to behold

Linley was treating him as ‘fish bait’.

“Normally, a clan will just send out a single squad. The enemies won’t suspect anything.” Linley said.

“Fine. That’s what we’ll do.” The Grand Elder said.

Emanuel didn’t know how to dispute this.

“Make your preparations. You’ll head out immediately.” The Grand Elder said.

“Yes, Grand Elder.” Linley and Emanuel both bowed, and then Linley and Emanuel both left.

“Linley.” The Grand Elder suddenly said.

Linley, puzzled, turn to look at the Grand Elder. A voice entered his mind. “Linley, you are still just a God. You still have a lot of room for improvement. If you are to truly encounter any dangers on this mission, immediately use that drop of Sovereign’s Might. Your life is far more valuable than a drop of Sovereign’s Might.”

Linley felt a warm feeling in his heart, but he was puzzled as well.

When the Grand Elder assigned this mission, it seemed as though she was showing partiality towards Emanuel. And yet, here she was, saying this to him.

“Yes, Grand Elder.”

Linley didn't continue to ponder it, and just acknowledged. Emanuel and Linley thus immediately left the Azure Dragon Palace.

“Linley, this time, we'll be joining forces. I hope that when we do battle, we won't have any suspicions of each other.” Emanuel sent to Linley through divine sense. Linley glanced at him sideways, then chuckled and sent back, “Naturally.”

As he spoke, Linley flew directly towards the residences of Squad Thirteen.

Emanuel watched as Linley left. He let out a cold laugh, then he flew towards his own squad as well.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 30, Surrounded And Attacked

Within Indigo Prefecture's borders. Within the vast, empty skies, a serpentine, dragon-shaped metallic lifeform was flying through the air. Moments later, another metallic lifeform in the shape of a black panther followed from behind.

Within the dragon-shaped metallic lifeform, there were twelve people in total.

To be precise, there was Emanuel's group of eleven, along with a Deathgod Golem. Emanuel looked at the Deathgod Golem, and he couldn't help but feel rather uncomfortable in his heart. This Deathgod Golem belonged to Linley. By placing the Deathgod Golem here, Linley would be able to accurately determine the location of the metallic lifeform at all times.

"Elder Linley, your metallic lifeform had best not be too far away from mine. Otherwise, if battle begins and you were unable to make it over, that would be terrible." A yellow light flashed through Emanuel's eyes as he said in a low voice.

The Deathgod Golem's eyes opened, and it looked towards Emanuel.

"Elder Emanuel, don't worry. Although the location of the metallic lifeform that I am on is constantly changing, the distance between us won't become too great. Once battle starts, I'll immediately hurry over." Linley's voice came out of the Deathgod Golem.

"That would be good." Emanuel said.

By having the Deathgod Golem ride on Emanuel's metallic lifeform, Linley was able to easily locate Emanuel at all times, which naturally allowed him to more easily control the location of his own metallic lifeform. It might be more than ten kilometers away from Emanuel's, or it might be within ten kilometers, or it might even fly up ahead of Emanuel's.

In short...

He was trying not to arouse anyone's suspicions.

"Whoosh!"

The dragon-shaped metallic lifeform suddenly passed through a very wide river, and the waters of the river rolled about turbidly. Suddenly, a head suddenly appeared from within the waters, and this person stared up at the metallic lifeform as it flew past. "Hmph. The Azure Dragon clan's men truly are daring. They still dare to so arrogantly follow these predetermined paths...all of them are just looking for death!"

When clansmen of the Four Divine Beasts clan were intentionally challenging their enemies to a fight, they would change the shape of their metallic lifeforms into the shape of one of the four divine beasts. That way, the intelligence agents would immediately be able to recognize it. Adding a divine sense sweep...they would thus be certain.

"I need to immediately report this back to the clan." This person didn't even glance at the other metallic lifeform.

This was because the metallic lifeform Linley was on was more than seven or eight kilometers away, and it wasn't following in a direct line. After all, the line of sight for a Deity was limited, and so too was their divine sense. Given that he was seven or eight kilometers away, and that there were many mountain forests blocking the line of sight, how could anybody notice?

The intelligence network of the eight great clans was extremely efficient. That very day, the news made its way back. Although the eight great clans were separated into two different areas, the exchange of information between them was still very fast, and they immediately came to a conclusion.

This time, the assignment of assaulting the Azure Dragon clan's squad was assigned to the Ashcroft clan and the Barbary clan. This was because last time, each of the two clans had lost a Seven Star Fiend to the Azure Dragon clan. This time, it was their turn for revenge.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Twenty people were currently flying at a low altitude through the air.

“Last time, we lost two Seven Star Fiends, but they didn't lose a single one. This time, we definitely have to kill that Seven Star Fiend belonging to the Azure Dragon clan.” The leader, a tall, green-eyebrowed man, said in a solemn voice.

“Elder Brother, this time, Elder Bulo [Bu'lo] will be with us. There definitely won't be any problems.” Another person, a somewhat skinnier, green-eyebrowed man, laughed.

These two siblings were both three meters tall, a typical example of a Barbary clan member. The only thing remarkable about them was their green eyebrows. ‘The Green Eyebrow Brothers’ of the Barbary clan were a pair of very famous Seven Star Fiends, and were exceedingly strong.

As for Bulo...

His fame was widespread in the Netherworld, and he was one of the supreme experts of the Ashcroft clan. For three commanders to be sent on this mission was because this time, the clans were determined to avenge the previous humiliation.

It didn't matter if their people died.

But two Seven Star Fiends of theirs died without killing a single Seven Star Fiend of the enemy? There was no way the eight great clans would accept this!

The tall, powerful green-eyebrowed man turned to look at the person next to them. He couldn't help but feel his heart tremble. This person was just 1.7 meters tall, and in the eyes of the Barbary clan, such a person was just a ‘tiny little fellow’.

But...nobody dared to look down this person.

His entire body was covered in a long gray robe. He was bald, and his dry, wavy hair was slick against his head. His hair seemed yellow and dry, as though it had no life in it at all. His face was covered in frowns and wrinkles, giving him an ancient appearance, and in his ears hung a pair of green serpents.

“Hiss...” Those two green serpents were speaking in the serpentine language.

“I hope that this time, the Azure Dragon clan sent out that person named Linley!” Bulo opened his eyes, which were of a very muddy color, with some occasional yellow light flashing through them. He said in a hoarse voice, “Last time, it was he who killed my grandson.”

“If Linley goes, then Elder Bulo, we will definitely let you personally deal with him.” The skinny, green-eyebrowed man said hurriedly. Mosley had been Bulo’s grandson.

“Right.” Bulo nodded.

The green-eyebrowed siblings, although powerful members of the Barbary clan, in terms of status...were just middling amongst their Assembly of Elders. But this Bulo was different; Elder Bulo’s status in the Ashcroft family was extremely high.

In terms of power, he was within the top three for his clan as well. For the Ashcroft clan to send him out meant that, clearly, this time they were determined to kill the Azure Dragon clan’s forces.

“I wonder how this Linley compares with that Genius Elder, ‘Blue’, of the Azure Dragon clan.” Elder Bulo chuckled.

“He’s definitely inferior.” The tall, green-eyebrowed man said. “Although that Linley has a tough body, it seems his soul defense isn’t that great...far weaker than that Genius Elder. For you to kill him, Elder Bulo, he should feel honored.”

Bulo, as a member of the Ashcroft clan, was a soul attack specialist to begin with. At the same time...his body was also extremely powerful.

Anyone capable of being in the top three of one of the great clans was a person of terrifying power.

That year, when Bulo had battled with the ‘Genius Elder’, Bulo, neither had been able to kill the other.

If Linley and Emanuel had known that this time, the enemies had sent out this many experts, and especially that Bulo was amongst them, they probably would have retreated long ago. But Linley and Emanuel didn’t know...so naturally, they continued to advance.

Within that black panther shaped metallic lifeform. Linley was currently drinking wine with a Highgod.

“It’s been half a year. The eight great clans really are inefficient.” Linley sighed.

“Captain, the eight great clans live at the borders of Indigo Prefecture. They are hundreds of millions of kilometers away from us. Even if they are efficient and fast, they’ll still need half a year before making their way to us. If they are slow, it might even take them one or two years.” That squad member said.

Linley glanced at this squad member.

This squad member was named ‘Isadore’ [Yi’sa’duo]. During the last attack, some members of Linley’s Squad Thirteen had been lost. Although Shanda and the others still had divine clones, the power of those divine clones was insufficient, and so they retired from Bloodbath Gorge.

Isadore was one of the replacements.

“Isadore, be careful during the battle.” Linley laughed. When he had gone and informed Squad Thirteen that this time, he only needed to be one person, Isadore had very excitedly convinced the others to allow himself to be the one to accompany Linley.

“I know, Captain.” Isadore’s eyes were gleaming. “But Captain, although I have to protect myself, I need to kill our enemies as well. Over the past ten thousand years, I’ve been waiting for this day the entire time...the forces of the eight great clan were merciless in their pursuit of us that year. When our Four Divine Beasts clan was powerful, they all cowered before us, but now that our ancestors are dead, they begin attacking like

wild dogs. Men, women, the elderly, the young...they'll wipe out any member of our Four Divine Beasts clan!"

Isadore's heart was filled with anger and hate.

Linley couldn't help but sigh. "This hatred and enmity truly has become a great one!" That year, each of the great clans had wildly pursued and attacked, all the way to Indigo Prefecture. This had been a very major event. When Linley had just arrived in Indigo Prefecture and been buying books, even that staff member had known that the Four Divine Beasts clan was engaging in a major battle.

Within the dragon-shaped metallic lifeform.

"Everyone, be careful. The enemy can appear at any moment." Emanuel said quietly. "Remember. Don't permit anyone to draw near our metallic lifeform. Anyone who draws near, be it Demigod or God, will be executed."

Last time, Linley had relied upon drawing close to the metallic lifeform before launching a sudden ambush, thus causing Emanuel to be wary as well.

"Haha..." Nearby, Linley's Deathgod Golem began to laugh. The Deathgod Golem had Linley's consciousness within, and it could thus be considered one of Linley's clones, in a way.

"There's nothing funny about it, Elder Linley. You were able to hide your strength. Perhaps others can do the same. It's best to be cautious." Emanuel said.

"Yes. It's best to be cautious." The Deathgod Golem spoke in Linley's voice.

Right at this moment...

"Not good! The enemy arrived!" Emanuel's face changed, and he instantly collected this metallic lifeform. Immediately, the eleven of them and the Deathgod Golem were now hovering in mid-air. Linley, through the Deathgod Golem, was able to see everything clearly. On the ground below them, twenty-plus figures were charging up at high speed.

"So many?" Emanuel's face changed dramatically.

"Elder Linley!" Emanuel immediately urged. "Hurry over."

"Don't worry." The Deathgod Golem said.

"Haha...child of the Azure Dragon clan, you can die now." Amidst the loud laughter, two tall, powerfully built green-eyebrowed men who looked similar charged up, wielding double-edged greatswords in their hands. Behind them, twenty five Six Star Fiends attacked as well.

Emanuel's face became ugly to behold.

The difference in power was too great.

"Roaaaaaar!!!"

Emanuel let out a fierce roar, and his entire body became covered in draconic scales. Instantly, he entered Dragonform, while at the same time, a white mist spread out from around his body, covering the entire area and making all sorts of illusions appear.

"We aren't weaker than you in the Elemental Laws of Water."

The Green Eyebrow Brothers laughed loudly as they surrounded and attacked Emanuel.

“Slash!” “Bang!”

The twenty five Six Star Fiends of the eight great clans attacked the ten Six Star Fiends of the Azure Dragon clan. The difference in numbers was simply too great...the Six Star Fiends wildly battled against each other, and exploding sounds thundered nonstop. The air trembled, blood splattered everywhere, and one figure after another fell from the skies.

“Bang!” Emanuel’s right arm exploded, and he was knocked flying backwards.

“Die!” An indistinct, freezing light flashed towards him.

Right at this moment, Emanuel suddenly opened his mouth. The strange thing was, behind him appeared an enormous coiling illusion of an Azure Dragon. The enormous Azure Dragon Phantom was like the size of a mountain, and it stared at the two Seven Star Fiends with its illusory eyes.

“Not good.”

The faces of the Green Eyebrow Twins changed.

“Retreat!” The two retreated towards different directions at the same time at high speed.

But at the same time, an indistinct azure light rippled outwards through space as though it were water, and the ripples instantly struck the two Green Eyebrow Brothers, and their bodies both trembled.

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

“Captain!” The Six Star Fiends of the eight great clans saw that their captains were in danger.

“Raaaaaargh!” All of them hurriedly charged towards Emanuel. There was a difference between a Six Star Fiend and a Seven Star Fiend, but when several Six Star Fiends joined forces against a Seven Star Fiend, the Seven Star Fiend couldn’t be complacent either.

Emanuel had no choice but to retreat, while at the same time, he cursed mentally, “Why hasn’t Linley arrived yet?”

The Green Eyebrow Brothers had retreated towards different directions, trying to put some distance between each other, so as to force the scope of the innate divine ability, ‘Dragon Roar’, to be wider, and thus lessen the power of the attack. At this moment, that larger, taller green-eyebrowed man laughed angrily. “This innate divine ability really is powerful.”

And then, they charged over as well.

But right at this moment...

The green-eyebrowed man noticed one of his subordinates was frantically messaging him through divine sense, “Captain, careful!”

The green-eyebrowed man hurriedly turned to look. He saw a Dragonformed figure flying towards him at high speed, with a pair of dark golden eyes staring fixedly at him. What shocked this green-eyebrowed man was, the newcomer actually had fierce, sharp spikes on his back!

“He is Linley!” The green-eyebrowed man was immediately shocked to his senses.

Linley's unique Dragonform, after he had killed those two Seven Star Fiends, had been made known to the high level members of the eight great clans.

"Flee!" The green-eyebrowed man immediately turned to flee.

At this time, an earthen yellow light spread out, forming an enormous sphere of earthen yellow light. The green-eyebrowed Seven Star Fiend, just a hundred meters away from Linley, was naturally trapped within that area, and a terrifying gravity was applied to his body.

His speed slowed drastically!

"Aaaargh!" Knowing that he wouldn't be able to flee, the green-eyebrowed man turned and delivered a full force sword blow towards Linley.

An illusory, translucent sword shadow flew out of his greatsword, shooting straight towards Linley. Linley didn't have any time to dodge, and he didn't try to dodge! He still charged straight towards that green-eyebrowed man. As that translucent sword shadow pierced not Linley's body, Linley also delivered a vicious, smashing fist blow against the head of the green-eyebrowed man.

"BANG!"

The head was shattered, and the divine spark flew out.

"Big Brother!" The distant, skinnier green-eyebrowed man, upon seeing this, couldn't help but call out in agony.

On a distant mountaintop, Elder Bulu, who hadn't been planning to get involved, couldn't help but raise his head and stare, his eyes gleaming. "So he is Linley. Hmph. Those idiots from the Barbary clan. As soon as they meet someone with a tough body, they are useless."

Elder Bulu's lips trembled slightly.

Instantly...

An enormous metallic lifeform in the shape of a black serpent appeared behind Elder Bulu. This enormous black serpent covered the entire mountain. Its body was so enormous as to be astonishing. A terrifying aura suddenly filled the skies.

After having just killed a Seven Star Fiend, Linley, for some reason, felt a sense of fear in his heart.

Linley turned to stare below him, and he saw Elder Bulu staring at him coldly. The shadowy illusion of that enormous black serpent, in particular, caused Linley to unconsciously think about what he had seen last time.

"Not good. This is the innate divine ability, 'Soul Extinguisher'." Linley's face changed dramatically.

Last time, his subordinate had rescued him, but this time, there was nobody near him.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 31, A Battle of Sovereign's Might

The speed of this innate divine ability, 'Soul Extinguisher', was simply too fast. On the ground, that balding Elder Bulu stared coldly as his lips moved slightly. Behind him hovered that enormous illusion of a black serpent, which only had a single, solitary red eye, and the eye was staring fixedly at Linley.

A crack appeared in Elder Bulu's forehead, between his eyebrows, and a translucent light instantly slashed through the skies, piercing into the range of the 'Blackstone Space', shooting directly into Linley's body. The speed was so fast that Linley wasn't able to dodge at all.

The innate divine ability of the Ashcroft clan – Soul Extinguisher!

"Elder Linley!" The surviving Six Star Fiends of the Azure Dragon clan, upon seeing this, were all stunned.

"Bastard." The skinny, green-eyebrowed man ground his teeth as he stared at Linley, rage still burning in his heart. Just now, it had been Linley who had killed his older brother. "It's your luck that I wasn't able to kill you myself."

From afar, as Emanuel saw this, his eyes lit up. "The Azure Dragon ring!"

Emanuel immediately flew towards Linley at high speed.

Within the limitless space in Linley's mind, outside his sea of consciousness, there was that protective membrane of scales which was a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. This enormous membrane had a single tiny flaw, and that flaw was its weakness.

On the surface of the soul sea.

Beneath the seven-colored sword-shaped soul, a Linley dressed in a light green robe was standing. This was Linley's 'divine wind clone'. When battling, Linley only brought out a single one of his divine clones.

In the hands of his divine wind clone, there was a drop of azure water...water-type Sovereign's Might.

"Let's see if you can break through. If you can break through, then I'll be forced to use this Sovereign's Might." Linley had been prepared long ago, and he had his divine wind clone carry that drop of Sovereign's Might at all times. As for the divine wind clone, within the soul sea, it was standing right next to that sword-shaped soul.

Once danger came, his divine wind clone would immediately activate the drop of Sovereign's Might and use it to protect the soul, as well as counter-attack.

"Crunch!"

That translucent ray of light shot out at incomparable speed, as straight as an arrow, piercing forward, drilling down with vicious precision against that semi-translucent scaled membrane. It was so fast and so vicious...that it was definitely the most powerful attack that Linley had ever encountered.

Crack!

Like an egg striking a stone, the ray of light struck directly atop the scaled membrane, and then it completely shattered apart.

“Eh? This is the Soul Extinguisher?” Linley was stunned. “How come it didn’t hurt me at all. Even that simple soul attack which Mosley had used was more dangerous to me than this innate divine ability.”

“It seems as though this attack doesn’t have any sentience at all.”

Indeed. Innate divine ability were very rigid, fixed types of attacks. For example, the ‘Godeater’ ability could only be used to devour divine sparks. If it succeeded, it succeeded. If it failed, it failed. The ‘Soul Extinguisher’ could only shoot forward, using raw, brute force to shatter anything that blocked in its path, then extinguished the enemy’s soul.

It was the same for Dylin and Tarosse’s innate divine abilities. The power was great, but the abilities were very rigid.

Once these innate divine abilities were activated, they would consume quite a bit of spiritual energy. You couldn’t use less spiritual energy if you wanted to. They were extremely rigid.

For soul attacks, sentience actually didn’t matter too much.

This was because generally speaking, if a Highgod had a ‘soul-protecting divine artifact’, it would protect all parts of the soul. For example, Bebe. His soul-protecting divine artifact protected every part of his soul. There were no ‘weak spots’...and thus, sentience didn’t matter.

One simply had to use raw power to break through. That was enough.

This was true for the ‘Soul Extinguisher’ as well. Unfortunately, what Linley possessed was a damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Aside from that flaw, the defensive strength of the other areas was exactly the same as a normal soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

A Highgod, break through the defense of a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact with his attack?

In his dreams!

Thus...this technique by a supreme expert, ‘Bulo’, failed.

Linley stood there in the boundless skies, in the center of a sphere of earthen yellow light that was five hundred meters in diameter. On the ground, that balding, ancient Elder ‘Bulo’ raised his head to stare at Linley. That originally cold, sinister expression of his gradually changed into astonishment.

“Swoosh!” Emanuel flew towards Linley at high speed, laughing mockingly in his heart. “Those idiots. They killed Linley, but they didn’t immediately go take the spoils of battle. But how could they know that Linley had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact?”

Emanuel was exceedingly delighted with himself.

“Linley, now that you are dead, this belongs to me.” Emanuel was very smug, but as he entered the region of the Blackstone Space, he couldn’t help but be puzzled. “Why hasn’t Linley’s Blackstone Space collapsed?”

If a person died, his space should collapse.

“Emanuel.” A cold, emotionless voice rang out.

“Uh?” Emanuel was stunned. He turned to look, and saw Linley’s dark golden eyes staring at him.

“Why have you come over? To help me out?” Linley stared at Emanuel, who had a look of astonishment on his face. Linley couldn’t help but laugh coldly in his heart, “This Emanuel has never given up on acquiring my Coiling Dragon ring.”

Emanuel immediately recovered from his shock. He couldn’t help but laugh awkwardly, “Elder Linley, you really are formidable. I...I saw that you were in a dangerous situation just now, Elder, and so I wanted to come help. But it seems, Elder, you don’t need my assistance. I’ll go deal with some other people. I’ll hand that old fellow down below to you. I trust, Elder Linley, that you’ll be able to easily deal with him.”

Emanuel immediately flew away, retreating.

“Despicable fellow!”

“Hmph!” Linley felt contempt in his heart, then turned to look at the bald fellow who had attacked him. “Easily deal with him? It would seem that it won’t be very easy to kill this old fellow.” Linley could have had a sense of danger.

But Linley wasn’t afraid either.

He currently had three drops of Sovereign’s Might, and his divine wind clone was right there in his sea of consciousness, ready to activate it at any moment.

“Haha...”

Ancient-sounding laughter rang out from the mouth of the old, bald figure below him. The wrinkles on his face contorted like serpents. “Linley, it now seems that last time, when you killed Mosley and the other one, you were still hiding your power! Admirable, admirable!”

Linley stared at this old man, and as he did, one person’s biographical data floated up to his mind.

When in Bloodbath Gorge, the Azure Dragon clan had provided him with a very clear explanation of some of the particularly dangerous individuals of the eight great clans. The danger these individuals posed was vastly greater than that of ordinary Seven Star Fiends. They were comparable to the clan’s ‘trump cards’!

The old man in front of him was one of them!

What Linley didn’t know was that his accomplishments in the previous battle had brought him to the attention of the various great clans, and they too had put his information into their list of ‘dangerous figures’.

“If my guess is correct, you should be Elder Bulu of the Ashcroft clan.” Linley said in a clear voice as he stood there, high up in the air in the middle of that enormous sphere, staring down at Bulu.

“Correct.”

Bulu smiled, but because his face was covered in wrinkles, this smile made him look all the more savage. “You were able to resist my innate divine ability, which means your soul defense is truly quite formidable. But you intentionally pretended that it was your weak spot. Hmph. Hmph. Admirable.”

That ancient voice echoed in the skies.

“However, today, I want to see how your physical defense is, in comparison to your ‘Genius Elder’, Blue!” The bald old man said, and then his entire body began to hiss as tiny, dense black scales appeared, covering his entire body. A fierce, slender serpentine tail emerged from behind him as well...

The Ashcroft clan descended from a supreme divine beast of the Netherworld, the ‘Nether Serpent’.

Their strength was no less than that of the Azure Dragon clan's.

"Linley!" A furious bellow rang out, and a pale, ashen shadow tore through the skies, charging towards Linley.

Linley turned and saw that a seemingly blurry white figure was coming towards him. It was a savage-faced, green-eyebrowed man. The man immediately charged into the Blackstone Space, and as he did, Linley instantly changed the direction of the gravity.

Made it go downwards!

The skinny, green-eyebrowed man strove to resist that downwards pull, but his speed still slowed dramatically.

Right at this moment, he heard a furious shout. "Hales [Hei'er'si], leave Linley to me. You go kill the other one!"

The skinny, green-eyebrowed man turned to look at the already Serpentformed Bulo, then said in a hateful voice, "Fine, Elder Bulo, I'll hand this Linley to you. You absolutely must kill him and avenge my elder brother!"

"Don't worry." Buler was completely confident.

The skinny, green-eyebrowed man, 'Hales', glared hatefully at Linley, then with a cold snort turned and charged towards the distant Emanuel. Emanuel had been watching this entire time. When he saw that Hales went to attack Linley as well, his joy was indescribable.

Who would have imagined that with but a single word from that bald old man, Hales had come to attack him instead.

"Motherf*cker..." With a low curse, Emanuel had no choice but to charge towards Hales.

Linley stared up in front, at the 'freak' located outside his Blackstone Space. Elder Bulo's entire body was densely covered by the tiny black scales of the Nether Serpent. Only his chest still had a patch of large violet scales.

His slender serpentine tail quivered slightly, while in the center of Elder Bulo's forehead, a single red eye had appeared from a crack.

"So this is the transformation of the Nether Serpent clan?" Linley was secretly astonished.

In truth, Linley's Dragonform was just as bizarre as Bulo's. He had multiple fierce spikes radiating out from his spine, while his elbows and knees had sharp spikes jutting out as well. Linley's entire body looked akin to a human-shaped weapon.

Freak against freak!

"Linley, today, you absolutely will die." Elder Bulo said in his hoarse voice. "Only, I want to see how long you can hold out for!"

"Bulo, today, you too must die. I, too, want to see how long you can hold out!" Linley said coldly. Linley had already made his plans in advance. First, he'd rely on his body to battle. If he wasn't able to hold out...then even if he had to sacrifice a drop of Sovereign's Might, he had to kill this Bulo.

An expert of this level was worth sacrificing a drop of Sovereign's Might for.

“Bang!” Elder Buló suddenly shot forward, charging directly into the Blackstone Space, and as he did, his speed couldn’t help decline.

“In my Blackstone Space, you will be at a great disadvantage.” Linley charged towards Elder Buló.

But right at this moment...

Linley discovered, to his astonishment, that Elder Buló’s entire body wriggled forward like a serpent, easily and agilely gliding forward. Even within the Blackstone Space, although Elder Buló’s speed wasn’t that fast, he was still incredibly agile.

“How...how is this possible?” Linley was shocked.

This was the first time a person within his Blackstone Space had been affected so weakly.

“Haha...” Elder Buló laughed wildly, and suddenly, he transformed into a black shadow, piercing through the skies and charging directly towards Linley. Linley, astonished, released a backhand palm blow, carrying within it the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ as he smashed towards that black shadow!

Two terrifying surges of energy collided.

“WHAP!”

A sound that was so clear and sharp, it caused space itself crack apart. Spatial ripples spread out in every direction, while Linley himself was sent flying backwards from the vibrations of the clash. His already Dragonformed right hand was uncontrollably trembling, and the palm of his hand was filled with a heart-boring pain.

“Your body’s strength really isn’t bad.” Elder Buló snickered.

“Why the smugness?” Linley gritted his teeth. “In my Blackstone Space, although the effect on you isn’t great, it isn’t small either.”

Linley flashed forward like a bolt of lightning, while Elder Buló didn’t show any weakness either, immediately moving forward to welcome him.

“Spiritual Chaos!” Linley instantly used his spiritual energy through the black stone to affect Elder Buló, while at the same time, his twin fists struck out mercilessly...

Although Elder Buló was able to resist the Spiritual Chaos technique, he still was slightly distracted.

“Whap!” “Bam!” “Bang!”

Linley’s fists, legs, and even his draconic tail struck viciously in succession against Elder Buló.

“Eh?” Linley discovered, to his astonishment, that Elder Buló’s body was very slippery. It felt as though only half of the power of his blows had been applied. Elder Buló, with a somersault, flipped far away, then recovered in mid-air. He began to laugh from his rage. “Your soul really is quite formidable.”

“However...”

Elder Buló’s body actually began to lengthen, as though he was transforming into a serpent, becoming soft and boneless as his serpentine tail extended as well. Elder Buló, normally just the height of an ordinary person, had now transformed into a serpentine shape that was dozens of meters long.

“Haha...” Suddenly, from afar, a wild burst of laughter erupted, and a surge of terrifying power blasted out. Even Linley and Elder Bulo, in the midst of their battle, couldn’t help but be distracted and turn to look...

“You want to kill me? In your dreams!”

Emanuel’s entire body was encased in azure light, and every part of his body was emanating with that heart-shaking aura. As for that green-eyebrowed Hales, he was already dead, the shattered remnants of his corpse having already fallen to the ground.

“Emanuel used his Sovereign’s Might?” Linley was shocked.

“Sovereign’s Might?” Elder Bulo’s face changed dramatically as well.

Because the person who had used the Sovereign’s Might...belonged to the enemy!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 32, Wanting to Steal a Chicken, Instead Losing the Bait

“Wonderful.” Linley rejoiced. “Although Emanuel and I have some conflicts between us, we are of the same clan, after all.” Emanuel, upon having used his Sovereign’s Might, had gained tremendous power.

As for the enemy, the two Green Eyebrow Brothers had both died, leaving behind only Elder Buló!

It was easy to see who held the advantage.

Elder Buló suddenly let out a savage growl, and the eye in the center of his forehead turned so red, it seemed as though it was about to drip blood. Suddenly, he swiped out with his arm, and that soft, boneless arm actually elongated, slashing through the air and clawing towards Linley. The space which the arm danced through began to tremble.

“Swish!” A devilish violet light flashed.

Where the devilish sword light flashed past, space split apart, revealing tears. Bloodviolet chopped directly against that black scaled-covered arm.

“Hiss...” An ear-piercing sound suddenly came from long, slender arm. The scales split open, and Bloodviolet plunged into the flesh. However, it wasn’t able to cut any deeper, as the flesh was incomparably tough.

“Haaaargh!”

Linley, with a savage right fist, swung directly at that long arm, but with a ‘bang’ sound, the arm actually twisted, clawing towards Linley’s elbow.

Linley wasn’t able to dodge in time at all, Elder Buló managed to seize his right arm.

Elder Buló’s fingernails suddenly turned black, and as sharp as daggers. At the same time, Elder Buló suddenly applied pressure through his left arm, using those sharp fingernails to try and pierce into Linley’s right arm. Linley let out a low growl, and the muscles on his right arm instantly bulged.

“Ah!” Linley kicked out mightily, smashing directly towards that long arm.

“Bang!” When the tip of his foot connected with the flesh on that long arm, it was like having kicked a wad of cotton.

Elder Buló’s arm trembled slightly, but he had actually managed to deflect Linley’s attack. “Swoosh!” Elder Buló borrowed the counter-forced to come charging closer, and as he did, this giant that was tens of meters long came hurtling towards Linley.

A bloody aura was throwing itself towards Linley at the same time as well.

“This Elder Bulo’s defense is not only powerful, it is also as slippery and soft as a serpent. How odd.” Linley began to sense how hard to deal with this person was. This Nether Serpent clan, capable of stalemating the Azure Dragon clan, really did have its own unique abilities.

“Emanuel, hurry up and join up with me to kill him.” Linley hurriedly sent through divine sense.

After having used a drop of Sovereign’s Might, Emanuel was now extremely powerful.

But Linley discovered, to his amazement, that Emanuel was pretending to have heard nothing, and was instead chasing after and pursuing those fleeing enemy Six Star Fiends.

“Join forces with you?” Emanuel laughed coldly in his heart. “In your dreams. I’ll first let that Bulo kill you, and then I’ll take that Azure Dragon ring. Although you have clones, and I won’t be able to bind it with blood right away, but...your remaining divine clones are so weak. How will you fight against me?”

It was only because Linley was powerful that he was able to maintain ownership of the Coiling Dragon ring.

As Emanuel saw it, if Linley’s most powerful divine clone was destroyed, how could Linley continue to keep the Azure Dragon ring?

“Bastard!” Linley cursed in his heart. He was cursing both Emanuel as well as this Elder Bulo who was right in front of him. In a physical close-combat, Elder Bulo occasionally hit hard and occasionally was soft and slippery, causing Linley to be at complete disadvantage.

“Bang!”

The two separated once again.

“This Linley really is tough to deal with.” Elder Bulo felt a headache coming as well.

Just based on close-quarters combat, he was stronger than Linley. But...in that Blackstone Space, he was at a disadvantage to begin with. In addition, Linley would constantly, randomly change the direction of the gravity, sometimes upwards, sometimes downwards, sometimes towards Linley, sometimes away from Linley.

The bizarre changes of the gravity’s direction caused Elder Bulo a headache, causing him to be unable to have any advantage at all.

“Emanuel, come over and kill him together with me!” Linley called out loudly.

“Emanuel?” Elder Bulo was shocked.

“Eh?” Emanuel couldn’t help but turn over.

Just now, when Linley had used divine sense, Emanuel could pretend that he didn’t hear. But now that Linley was shouting so loudly, even the surviving Six Star Fiends of the clan heard the call. Naturally, those distant, spectating intelligence agents probably heard the call as well.

If he still didn’t act, then if Linley were to die, when the intelligence agents made their report, Emanuel would be in trouble!

“This Bulo is such an idiot.” Emanuel cursed to himself.

Shouting was something that required time. During a furious battle such as this, Linley didn't have any chance to shout at all. If Bulo was able to seize an advantage and to hold Linley down while beating upon him or just kill Linley, then Emanuel's plot would have succeeded.

But now that Linley and Bulo were battling to a virtual standstill, Linley naturally had the chance to shout out loudly.

"Alright, Linley, let's kill him together." Emanuel intentionally shouted back loudly as well.

These words frightened Bulo so much, he immediately went to his last resort...using Sovereign's Might!

"You want to kill me? Haha..." The ancient-sounding laughter shook the heavens, and Elder Bulo's body once more returned to his normal size. At the same time, his entire body became covered with a layer of a black glow, which at the same time also emanating a terrifying aura, completely comparable to Emanuel.

"He also used Sovereign's Might?" Linley was shocked. "The Elder said that the advantage our Four Divine Beasts clan has is that we have some more Sovereign's Might. I didn't expect that this Bulo has Sovereign's Might as well. Terrible."

The ancestors of the Four Divine Beasts clan were Sovereigns. Naturally, they had an excess of Sovereign's Might, giving virtually every single one of their Elders a drop.

As for the ancestors of the eight great clans, they weren't that formidable. Sovereign's Might was extremely rare, and only the most supreme of Elders would be in possession of a drop. And thus, Bulo had one!

"Emanuel, hurry over." Linley sent through divine sense, shouting frantically. Emanuel just stood there in mid-air, not in a hurry to charge over at all. Linley instantly understood. "This Emanuel...actually has this sort of plot!"

Emanuel laughed coldly in his heart. "He used Sovereign's Might? Excellent. Then first kill Linley."

"Linley!"

A low growl, and Elder Bulo charged directly towards Linley.

Linley's face changed. "Rumble..." The direction of the gravity of the Blackstone Space suddenly changed, transforming into a repulsive force! The powerful repulsive energy forced Elder Bulo outwards.

However, the power of Sovereign's Might was simply too great.

Even when trapped within the 'Blackstone Space', Elder Bulo was still able to forcibly resist that repulsive force, and his speed was still very fast. He wildly chased after Linley, who turned and ran directly towards Emanuel.

"If you won't come to me, I'll go to you!" Linley said to himself.

In an instant, Linley charged over to him.

"Hmph. I might as well kill you first, actually." Elder Bulo, seeing the nearby Emanuel, could sense the aura of Sovereign's Might emanating from him, and thus he immediately turned to attack Emanuel instead.

After all...

Emanuel was more of a threat to him!

Linley couldn't be bothered to care about Emanuel. "This Bulo is too powerful. When trapped in the Blackstone Space, he was still able to fight me to a draw. As for his soul attacks...it's only because he used his innate divine ability that he became deceived into thinking my soul defense is strong. Once he begins to use soul attacks, I definitely won't be a match for him."

This misunderstanding had caused Elder Bulo to not use any soul attacks at all.

But Linley could tell that even if he used Sovereign's Might, he still probably wouldn't be able to overcome Bulo. After all, in a normal situation, he was weaker than Bulo. If the two of them were both to use Sovereign's Might, the ratio of power between the two of them wouldn't change.

"Flee!"

Linley directly fled towards the north.

"Bang!" A terrifying explosive sound rang out. The battle between two experts who had both used Sovereign's Might was fierce and terrifying.

"Whoosh!"

Linley flew at high speed, while at the same time, he could sense the terrifying explosive vibrations from behind.

"This is too high profile." Linley was secretly shocked.

If he was able to defeat the opponent by using Sovereign's Might, Linley definitely would use it. But since he knew he wouldn't be able to win, it was best to flee.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!"

Two figures, one after the other, actually suddenly appeared in the skies above him. At the same time, a voice entered Linley's mind. "Linley, hurry up and use your Sovereign's Might. The two of us can join forces and kill him together!"

Linley raised his head to look.

He saw, in mid-air, an azure ball of light fleeing for his life, with a black ball of life in pursuit.

"Linley!" The azure ball of light suddenly turned, flying over to Linley once more.

Linley was now in the same situation that Emanuel had been in. He didn't want to help Emanuel, but Emanuel was now running towards him...forcing him to intervene.

"Linley, if you still refuse to act, once my divine water clone dies, I will definitely go tell the Grand Elder of this. Definitely!!!" Emanuel sent to Linley frantically through his divine sense.

A drop of Sovereign's Might contained an astonishing amount of energy.

After all, it was liquefied Sovereign power.

Generally speaking, in a battle, it could only last for a while. But Emanuel had used his Sovereign's Might earlier on, and it was quite some time ago. Once the energy of the Sovereign's Might was used up...he would definitely die.

"Hurry up, Linley!" Emanuel called out frantically.

“BANG!”

The azure ball of light once more exchange blows viciously with that black ball of light, and the azure ball of light was actually sent smashing down towards the ground. Emanuel clearly was at a disadvantage.

“Hey, what an exciting battle, eh?” A carefree voice suddenly shook the skies, entering the ears of these three. Unconsciously, Emanuel, Elder Buló, and Linley all turned to stare towards the source of that voice...

A muscular man, three meters tall, dressed in fiery red armor, with long, scarlet red hair fluttering freely in the breeze. His tiger-like eyes swept the area, and a smile was on his face.

“Oh, Linley!” The muscular man laughed as he looked towards Linley. “Long time no see. I heard that you became an Elder of the Four Divine Beasts clan? Haha, it seems as though it’s been less than a thousand years since we parted, but you’ve become so strong.”

Linley stared at this person. He was stunned for a long moment, then finally, Linley said, “Phusro!”

“Haha, you still remember me.” Phusro began to laugh loudly.

This man in front of him, amazingly enough, was that Volcano Titan. That person who had been subject to a master-servant bond, and so had been forced to transform into a small kitten and endure countless years of servitude and humiliation. That supreme expert, ‘Phusro’. Even a Seven Star Fiend, in front of Phusro, could only choose to flee.

“Swoosh!” The azure ball of light scurried towards Linley’s side. Linley turned to look towards ‘Emanuel’, only to see the azure light covering Emanuel’s body grow weaker and weaker, then completely vanish.

“My Sovereign’s Might is all used up.” Emanuel stared at him. “It’s up to you, now.”

But Elder Buló, his entire body still covered with that black aura, was hovering not too far away. “Used up your Sovereign’s Might? Haha, the two of you can die now.” As he spoke, he transformed into a ray of black light, shooting directly towards Linley.

“BANG!”

A ray of fiery light collided with the black light, and the black light was actually sent flying backwards.

Phusro stretched out his arm, retrieving that fiery, giant red awl. Elder Buló stood there in mid-air, staring at Phusro in shock. “You...you...” Just now, Phusro’s awl-blow had smashed him backwards.

Even an Asura couldn’t so easily send him flying backwards after he, Buló, had used Sovereign’s Might.

“Hey, what’s going on here?” Phusro frowned, staring at him.

“Who are you?” Elder Buló growled softly.

“That’s none of your business. This Linley is my friend. You want to kill him...” Phusro grinned. “After getting this weapon of mine, it hasn’t really killed any supreme experts yet.” The fiery red awl in Phusro’s hand was more than two meters long.

Sharp at one end, blunt at the other. It was like a massive bull’s horn.

Linley just watched all this happen in disbelief.

Phusro was powerful, true, but...Bulo had used Sovereign's Might. Currently, even if an Asura came, the Asura probably wouldn't be able to so effortlessly force him to retreat.

"Linley, he...who is he?" Emanuel was tongue-tied as well.

"A friend of mine." This was the only answer Linley could give. At the same time, Linley was puzzled. Phusro's weapon, in the past, had been a massive axe. Since when did it become this fiery red awl? This awl...

Seemed to be quite extraordinary!

"Then you are looking for death!" Elder Bulo bellowed furious. A long black whip appeared in his hand, and the long black whip, filled with Sovereign power, lashed out directly towards Phusro. Where the long whip passed, space itself split open.

But Phusro just grabbed his giant awl, then gave it a toss...

Like a dagger being thrown, the big, fiery red awl transformed into a ray of fiery light, soaring outwards. With a 'bang' sound, the black whip actually shattered. At the same time, a large hole appeared in Elder Bulo's chest.

The fiery red awl flew back into Phusro's hand.

"Are you still refusing to f*ck off? I injured you this time, but next time, I'm going to kill you." Phusro said, holding that giant, fiery awl.

"That...that's..."

Elder Bulo stared in disbelief at that red awl. "A Sovereign artifact?"

"Haha, not bad. Good eye." Phusro laughed smugly.

Sovereign's Might, to a Sovereign, was a commonplace thing. But a Sovereign artifact...that was something which a Sovereign had to spend countless amounts of time, effort, and Sovereign power to nurture and develop. The power of a Sovereign artifact vastly exceeded Sovereign's Might!

In particular, weapon-type Sovereign artifacts. Using them to kill Highgods would result in an utter massacre.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 33, Bulo, Unwilling to Give Up

Given how the situation had developed, in his heart, Bulo was filled with unwillingness to accept this outcome. “Hales and his brother both died. On this assault, our side lost a pair of Seven Star Fiends, but not a single one of the Seven Star Fiends of the Four Divine Beasts clan perished. And I even used up a drop of Sovereign’s Might!”

Humiliation!

Once the results of this battle became widely known, this would definitely result in the other members of the clan looking down at him, and the Patriarch would definitely be unhappy as well.

“But this person has a Sovereign artifact.” Bulo looked towards Phusro. Although his heart was filled with rage, he could only choose to submit. After all, resisting meant death! There was no question about this.

“Based on your transformation, you should be from the Netherworld’s Ashcroft clan.” Phusro stared down from up above, then said casually, “When you go back, convey some words back to your Patriarch. Just say that this time, I’m giving your Patriarch face and so I’m not killing you. But if next time, you guys still dare to do anything to my friend ‘Linley’, then hehe...haha...well, you can go imagine what the repercussions will be. Just remember, the only thing that matters is that you don’t do anything to Linley. As for the others, I don’t give a damn.”

Bulo’s heart trembled.

As for Emanuel, his face turned ugly to behold. He glanced sideways at Phusro. “This big fellow seems to have some sort of friendship with Linley, rather than some sort of friendship with my clan.” Phusro’s words made it very clear...

He wouldn’t get involved in the battle between the eight great clans and the Four Divine Beasts clan.

Linley’s heart was filled with questions.

“Phusro and I...in actuality, the only time we met and chatted was that time when he escaped. In truth, the relationship between us isn’t that deep. For my sake, he would be willing to set turn his face in opposition against the eight great clans?” Linley didn’t understand.

Could it be that he was just that charismatic?

It was easy to understand why Phusro would save him, but threaten the enemy’s Patriarch? This was very hard to understand.

“Right. I will definitely convey your words.” Bulo’s heart still held rage within it, but on the surface, he still lowered his head in submission. At present, Bulo had already completely reverted back to his human form, and even the two serpents hanging from his ears didn’t dare to hiss.

“Well, f*ck off, then!” Phusro waved his hand.

Bulo immediately transformed into a ray of light, moving towards the depths of the mountain forests, then disappearing.

After flying twenty or thirty kilometers, Bulo landed to the ground. His wrinkle-covered face began to twist and contort with rage, and his pair of viperous eyes became filled with a sinister light.

“Am I supposed to go back? Say that I failed to kill a single Seven Star Fiend, but that two of ours died?” Bulo was livid.

It wasn't a major issue if any of the other Elders of the clan failed in a mission. But...he was Bulo! A 'trump card' level figure within the clan. For him to meet with a result such as this on a mission...the other members of the eight great clans would definitely discuss this behind his back.

He couldn't accept being embarrassed like this!

When one possessed unlimited lifespan such as these supreme experts, one would care deeply about their 'face'.

“No. That Phusro is very possibly going to leave. Once he leaves...I can absolutely intercept them and kill them enroute.” Bulo's eyes lit up. Even though he didn't dare to kill Linley, he still dared to kill Emanuel.

“Whoooooosh.”

His Sovereign's Might turned transparent, and immediately spread out to a distance of tens of kilometers, encapsulating Phusro, Linley, and Emanuel, the three of whom were still engaging in conversation.

Sovereign's Might could be used for material attacks and could also be used for spiritual attacks.

Using divine sense to investigate, in turn, was in reality just spreading out one's spiritual energy.

This Sovereign's Might, since capable of being transforming into spiritual attacks and spiritual barriers, naturally was also capable of being used for 'divine sense scouting', and the effectiveness of it was very great. Even the distance and area at which it could be used was greatly expanded! But of course, how could an ordinary supreme expert possibly be willing to use up Sovereign's Might for divine sense scouting?

The effect of using Sovereign's Might to do scouting was akin to a Sovereign himself scouting. Naturally, Phusro, Linley, and Emanuel didn't notice it at all.

“Hey, little fella, you can go back now.” Phusro gestured disdainfully towards Emanuel. “It's been a long time since Linley and I met, and there's some things we have to say to each other. Hurry on back. What, do you want to eavesdrop on our conversation, kid?”

Emanuel didn't dare to say anything.

“Linley, I'll head back for now, then.” Emanuel smiled towards Linley while also making a respectful, fractional bow towards Phusro. But Phusro simply snorted, causing Emanuel to be rather embarrassed.

“Elder Emanuel, have a safe trip.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Elder Linley, you'll be going back by yourself. You need to be careful of the enemy as well.” Emanuel said, seemingly in a very friendly way. And then, Emanuel immediately flew away.

“Travelling by himself?” Bulo, who was using his Sovereign's Might to watch this, couldn't help but reveal a smile on his ancient, withered face. And then, his muddy yellow eyes narrowed. “I need to hurry. My Sovereign's Might has almost been used up. I need to seize this bit of remaining time to kill that fellow named Emanuel.”

Bulo immediately transformed into a ray of light, flying in pursuit.

A drop of Sovereign's Might in liquid form could be used for a fairly long period of time. Even if Buló didn't use the Sovereign's Might, he would be able to easily kill Emanuel. Given that he had in fact used it...at present, Emanuel had no ability to fight back at all.

Emanuel travelled back by himself towards the direction of the Four Divine Beasts clan, his face extremely sinister and gloomy.

This time, he had wanted to let Linley's strongest clone be killed. That goal had become a failure. But that was secondary. More importantly...he not only hadn't had any gains, he had even used up a drop of Sovereign's Might!

"A drop of Sovereign's Might...I only had one drop!" Emanuel felt great unhappiness in his heart.

If one had to use up Sovereign's Might, one had to at least have some gains to show for it. But what had he gained?

"The ancestors are dead. The clan's stockpile of Sovereign's Might has continuously dwindled, and is in fact personally overseen by the Patriarch. The Patriarch has always been biased against me...how can he possibly give me another drop of Sovereign's Might?"

While flying back, Emanuel continued to consider what to do.

"It's all Linley's fault. He didn't use his Sovereign's Might to join forces with me in killing that Buló. If we killed Buló...the Patriarch definitely would have bestowed another Sovereign's Might upon me for rendering such a great merit." Emanuel's heart remained filled with discontent.

But right at this moment...

"Eh?" Emanuel suddenly felt his heart clench in fear. He couldn't help to turn and look, and as he did, a black bolt of lightning seemed to strike towards him. The terrifying aura which emanated from that black flash caused Emanuel's face to change, instantly turning white!

"Sovereign's Might!" Emanuel's eyes turned round and huge.

"Bang!"

Emanuel's entire body was blown apart, and his divine spark fell down.

At this moment, a figure appeared in mid-air. Bald. Ancient. The figure was Elder Buló.

"Hmph. At least I've killed a Seven Star Fiend. When I go back, I'll be able to defend myself." Elder Buló had been very unwilling to accept this outcome, but after killing Emanuel, he immediately felt much better. When he went back to make the report...

He could completely explain that the reason why Linley didn't die was because of that Phusro. He himself didn't have the ability to do anything about it. But at least he had killed the other Seven Star Fiend.

"Whooosh."

With a wave of his hand, Elder Buló collected the interspatial ring, then let out a low snort. "So he really did have a divine clone staying in the Skyrite Mountains. This ring is pointless to me, then." Applying a bit of force to it, he made the interspatial ring shatter.

As for that divine spark hovering in front of him, Elder Buló couldn't even be bothered to grab it. He didn't care about such a thing.

“Eh?”

Elder Bulo lowered his head to look at himself. The black aura surrounding him had almost vanished.

“Better leave.” Elder Bulo seized the remaining moments to immediately fly towards the east, vanishing. And, just moments after Elder Bulo left, two figures pierced through the skies and appeared here. It was Linley and Phusro.

Linley lowered his head, looking down carefully at the ground.

He had been chatting idly with Phusro, but suddenly, he had sensed an astonishing energy ripple, and so he had immediately hurried over. The remnants of Emanuel’s shattered corpse were still on the ground, and his divine spark and divine artifacts were hovering there as well.

“I still came late.” Linley said. “Emanuel’s already dead.” With a flip of his hand, Linley collected the divine spark and the divine artifact.

“If he died, he died. What’s the big deal.” Phusro said disdainfully.

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

Died?

Linley didn’t feel the slightest bit of grief for Emanuel’s death. Earlier, at that dangerous moment, Emanuel had intentionally pretended that he didn’t hear Linley’s divine sense. He hadn’t helped, hoping to use Bulo to kill Linley.

“However, with him dead, I’ll have quite a few difficulties once I return.” Linley frowned. Emanuel, in the clan, was connected to quite a few people. “Hmph. We’ll wait and see. It was Bulo who killed him, after all.”

Upon sensing the aura of Sovereign’s Might from this place, Linley was able to guess that this was Bulo’s doing.

“Hey, Phusro. You weren’t finished speaking just now.” Linley turned to look at Phusro and laughed as he spoke.

“Oh. Right. That year, when I arrived at the ‘Muja Continent’, I acquired my Sovereign artifact.” As Phusro spoke, he began to laugh so happily that his eyes half-closed. Clearly, he felt quite delighted.

Muja Continent? Linley knew that this was one of the five continents of the Infernal Realm.

“Linley, have you ever seen a Sovereign?” Phusro said in an intentionally mysterious manner.

Linley shook his head. “No. I’ve only seen a scryer recording of a Sovereign. However, all I saw was an enormous blurry face formed from energy.”

“That’s just an illusion the Sovereign generated. It isn’t the Sovereign’s true body.” Phusro said smugly. “Linley, there’s something you don’t know...when I arrived at the Muja Continent, I met a supreme expert and engaged in a competition with him!”

“Competition?” Linley was stunned.

“Whatever we competed in, I lost!”

Phusro said resignedly. “We competed in material attacks. I lost. We competed in spiritual attacks. I still lost. We competed in speed. I lost...even when we competed in the aspect I am proudest in, my physical strength, I still lost.”

“You lost in everything?” Linley was shocked. At the same time, he couldn’t help but guess what the truth was.

“Only later did I discover...”

Phusro laughed. “He was a Sovereign!”

Although Linley had guessed this, upon hearing this, he was still shocked. After a moment, he laughed loudly, “Haha, Phusro, you actually competed against a Sovereign? Haha...”

“How was I supposed to know that he was a Sovereign? He hid his true power. I only took him to be another Highgod.” Phusro said resignedly. “He didn’t reveal off any of his majestic Sovereign’s presence...only at the end, when he asked if I was willing to be his Emissary or not, did he show off his majestic Sovereign’s presence. Only then did I realize he was a Sovereign.”

“A Sovereign of what element?” Linley asked.

“A fire-type Sovereign!”

Phusro laughed. “I am a fire-type expert. When I competed with him in attacks, we both competed in using fire-type attacks. Linley...I have the feeling that ever since I met you, my luck has been excellent!”

“The first time I met you, I escaped from my countless years of bondage.”

“And then, just a few centuries later, I became a Sovereign’s Emissary.”

Phusro was quite delighted with himself. “This is the Sovereign artifact the Sovereign bestowed upon me. My power was comparable to the Infernal Asuras to begin with. Now that I have a Sovereign artifact...haha, in the entire Infernal Realm, there are very few people capable of surpassing me.”

“Very few who can surpass you? You mean to say, there’s still some people stronger than you?” Linley laughed.

“A few, I suppose.”

Phusro said. “After all, in the Infernal Realm, there’s a number of Sovereign’s Emissaries. There’s also a few extremely rare divine beasts who have extremely powerful innate divine abilities...but actually, the most powerful of all are those Highgods who have become Paragons.

Linley nodded as well.

Paragons had completely mastered and completely fused all of the profound mysteries of one of the Elemental Laws. Fusing five profound mysteries and fusing all six profound mysteries to mastery...although it was only a difference of one profound mystery, the difference in power was tremendously great.

“I’ve been in the Infernal Realm for so long, but I haven’t seen a single Paragon yet.” Linley laughed.

“Neither have I.” Phusro shook his head helplessly. “Based on what the Sovereign said, these Paragon-level Highgods, although in terms of power are of course inferior to Sovereigns, are actually even fewer in number than Sovereigns...”

Linley agreed with this as well.

“I wonder...if one were to fuse all profound mysteries into one and become a Paragon, the most invincible of Highgods...what sort of power one would have.” Linley sighed to himself.

“Linley, I have some things to attend to. I’ll leave for now.” Phusro laughed. “As for your Four Divine Beasts clan, don’t just stupidly go battle for them nonstop. Protect yourself and improve your own power first.” After speaking, Phusro flew away.

Linley chuckled, watching Phusro leave.

“Time to go back.” Linley lowered his head, glancing at Emanuel’s corpse on the ground, then flew towards the Skyrite Mountains.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 34, The Eight Great Patriarchs

Bloodbath Gorge.

“Whoosh!” Emanuel was currently flying at high speed through Bloodbath Gorge. The other warriors within Bloodbath Gorge couldn’t help but stare, puzzled, as Emanuel flew past at high speed.

“Isn’t this that Elder Emanuel of the Azure Dragon clan? Why is he in such a rush?”

“No idea. Must be something urgent.”

The warriors within Bloodbath Gorge all couldn’t help but comment to themselves.

Currently, Emanuel couldn’t be bothered with the idle chatter of others. A ball of fire was blazing in his heart, and fury had filled his mind. He charged directly to the residence of his father, ‘Forhan’.

“Smash!” The door was pushed open.

Forhan had been seated in his room, quietly drinking tea. He couldn’t help but raise his head in amazement. “Emanuel, what are you doing here?”

Emanuel didn’t say anything. Turning, with a ‘creaaaak’ sound, he slammed the door shut.

“Bang!” Emanuel fell to his knees, his kneecaps smashing hard against the ground. Even the tough ground cracked apart from the force of it.

“Emanuel, what are you...” Forhan immediately stood up.

“Father!” Emanuel called out with grief and fury.

“What on earth has happened?” Forhan had a bad feeling...

“My...my divine water clone died! It was because of that Linley! Because of him!!!” Emanuel said, his entire body trembling. “It was all because of him! First, he intentionally refused to participate, and then, he parted ways with me!”

“Your divine water clone died?”

Forhan’s mind went momentarily blank. His son only had two bodies in total, one a divine water clone, the other a divine wind clone. The power of his divine wind clone was ordinary, and he hadn’t been able to fuse any of the profound mysteries.

His son wouldn’t even have the chance to refine a water-type divine spark and recover his former level of power.

“What exactly happened? Explain clearly.” Forhan said hurriedly.

“Yes, Father.”

Emanuel's face was covered in rage. Now that he had found someone to complain to, he immediately began to speak in detail. Only, once the words came out from Emanuel's mouth, the story had changed. It seemed as though everything Linley had done, he had done to try and harm Emanuel.

The Azure Dragon Palace. The fifth floor. A side room.

The Grand Elder was seated in the meditative position on a prayer mat, quietly training. Suddenly, the Grand Elder's forehead furrowed, and she opened her eyes. "Why are the two of them here?" The Grand Elder immediately stood up and walked towards the main hall.

"Grand Elder!" Forhan's voice rang out.

And then, Forhan and Emanuel entered the main hall on the fifth floor.

"What are you doing, rushing in here like this!" The Grand Elder shouted in a cold, unhappy voice.

"Grand Elder, Emanuel's divine water clone died." Forhan said frantically.

"Eh?" The Grand Elder was shocked. She couldn't help but look at Emanuel. "Emanuel, didn't you and Linley go together to carry out this mission? Also, you and Linley both had a drop of Sovereign's Might."

"Bang!" Emanuel knelt down heavily.

"Grand Elder, Linley and I encountered three Seven Star Fiends, all of whom were extremely strong. One of them was Elder Bulo of the Ashcroft clan." Emanuel said hurriedly.

The Grand Elder's face changed. "It was actually him? Given his status, he should have had a drop of Sovereign's Might."

"However, if you and Linley had both used your Sovereign's Might and joined forces, even if Bulo used Sovereign's Might, the two of you, when joining forces, should've been able to escape with your lives." The Grand Elder said.

"That Linley just watched me die without helping!"

Emanuel said hurriedly. "When I was in danger, he didn't help out at all. Afterwards, an expert suddenly appeared and ordered that Bulo to temporarily halt his attacks. That expert ordered Bulo to leave, and so I thought that I was safe. Linley then said that he had something to discuss with that expert, and so I was to leave by myself first."

"I didn't suspect anything, and thus left by myself. But who would have imagined..." Emanuel was filled with both rage and grief. "Grand Elder, just as I left, I was ambushed by that Bulo again and killed by him. Grand Elder...it must have been arranged by Linley. He definitely must have secretly used his divine sense to speak with that Bulo and told that Bulo to ambush me. Otherwise...how could Bulo have left, then returned to attack me?"

The Grand Elder, hearing this, frowned.

"For Linley to not assist earlier does show that he had the intention of harming you. However, as for Bulo's later attack...there's no way to be certain as to whether or not Linley used his divine sense to collude with Bulo." The Grand Elder said in a low voice. "Although Linley didn't assist you, you didn't die, after all. Your death was caused by Bulo's attack. It can't be counted as being caused by Linley."

"Grand Elder!" Emanuel was frantic.

Although the Grand Elder was his paternal grandmother, she was too obstinate and unfeeling. Even her son, 'Forhan', had to address her as 'Grand Elder.'.

"Grand Elder, think about it. If Linley didn't have the intention of killing Emanuel, how could Emanuel's divine water clone have died?" Forhan said frantically. "Why wouldn't he return alongside Emanuel? Why would he insist on them taking separate paths? Even if he wanted to speak in private, couldn't he just have Emanuel wait off to one side?"

"Also. That Bulo, having been ordered off by that mysterious expert...why would he dare return and attack? He definitely colluded with Linley." Forhan said frantically.

But they all forgot about something...

Bulo, after having used Sovereign's Might, was able to use a Sovereign's power for scouting.

"Grand Elder." Forhan said frantically.

The Grand Elder couldn't help but look towards Emanuel.

"Bang!" Forhan suddenly knelt down as well. Frantically, he said, "Mother!!!"

The Grand Elder's body trembled. Ever since she ordered Forhan to address her as 'Grand Elder', it had been many years since her son had addressed her as 'Mother' again.

"Mother, Emanuel is my only son. His divine water clone is now dead. For his divine wind clone to grow in power will be difficult, even after the passage of countless years! Mother, the future of your grandson has been shattered by that Linley. How can you...not even a little..."

As he spoke, Forhan began to shed tears.

The Grand Elder felt her heart clench.

If she wanted to penalize Linley, just by being slightly partial, she could indeed penalize him.

"Mother!!!" Forhan said frantically.

The Grand Elder looked at the two men kneeling in front of her. One was her son, and the other was her grandson. The Grand Elder took a deep breath, then said softly, "Child, rise."

The Grand Elder rarely displayed her emotions, and within the clan, she always gave the impression of being callous and emotionless.

However...

She was still a mother. Deep within her soul, there was still a very soft place. She wasn't completely stone-hearted and unfeeling.

Forhan and Emanuel, hearing this, were overjoyed.

"Mother. Linley's divine clone is at the Skyrite Mountains right now. We can interrogate him right away." Forhan said hurriedly. "Our Azure Dragon clan should be unified and work together, but Linley actually dares to act in such a way. Even if we don't execute him, we have to punish him heavily."

"Right. Punish him heavily."

Emanuel said hurriedly. “In addition, by what right does he, a junior, hold the Azure Dragon ring of the ancestor? The Azure Dragon ring should be in your possession, grandmother. Even if you don’t need it, it should be given to Father.”

The Grand Elder was silent.

“Mother, shall we send someone to summon Linley over?” Forhan said hurriedly.

Linley’s original body and divine wind clone were currently in the battlegrounds outside, while his fire, water, and earth clones remained in the Skyrise Mountains. They could be interrogated immediately.

“What’s the rush?”

The Grand Elder glanced sideways at each of them. “Even if I am to punish him, can it be that I am supposed to punish those clones? Linley’s original body isn’t even back yet.”

Forhan and Emanuel both came to their senses.

“Right. We shouldn’t interrogate him now. Otherwise, if we interrogate his clones, he might be so frightened that his original body flees. That won’t be worth it.” Emanuel said hurriedly. As Emanuel and Forhan saw it, the value of Linley’s clones was far inferior to the value of his original body.

After all...

Generally speaking, there were differences in power between the clones of an expert. The most important one was the one which mattered the most.

Within the borders of Indigo Prefecture. A place where four of the eight great clans were stationed.

The leader of the Ashcroft clan, which had moved here from the Netherworld, was currently chatting with Bulo’s divine water clone. After all, Bulo’s divine Death clone was still on the way back.

“Bulo, did you say he has a Sovereign artifact?” This Patriarch’s eyes were scarlet red, and his eyebrows appeared very devilish. His long black hair which glowed with a green light extended to his knees, and the two green serpents hanging from his ears were currently staring at Bulo.

This person...

Was the leader of the Ashcroft clan, and the ancestor of the Nether Serpent clan! The most powerful expert of the Nether Serpent clan.

“Yes, Father. That fire-type Sovereign artifact is very formidable.” Bulo said respectfully. “He also asked me to deliver a message to you. He said that he didn’t kill me because he was giving you face, but if in the future, we dare touch Linley, then the repercussions...we can imagine them for ourselves.”

“Hmph. Impudence.”

This Patriarch let out a cold snort.

“His Sovereign artifact is fire-type. He should thus be the Emissary of a Sovereign of Fire.” The Patriarch of the Nether Serpent clan considered this, then he couldn’t help but bark, “Pay a visit to the Boleyn clan with me.”

“Yes, Father.”

Immediately, the Patriarch of the Nether Serpents led Bulo directly towards the nearby Boleyn clan.

The Four Divine Beasts clan was led by the 'Azure Dragon clan', while the eight great clans was a temporary alliance. Currently, the most powerful of the clans, the 'Boleyn clan' of the Celestial Realm was their leader.

The Boleyn clan. The Radiant Palace.

The Radiant Palace was over a hundred meters tall, with multiple pillars that were emanating a soft white light supporting it. Currently, outside this palace, Bulo was there, standing alone in a respectful manner. As for within the palace, there were eight figures seated.

These eight were the eight Patriarchs of the eight great clans!

To be more precise, four of them were the true bodies of the Patriarchs, while the other four were the 'golem clones' of the Patriarchs of the other four clans, who were far away on the opposite end of the Indigo Prefecture. These 'golem clones' were 'Deathgod Golems', and held a hint of consciousness within them.

The reason they had Deathgod Golems here was so that they could discuss things in a group.

Bulo was respectfully narrating what had occurred in this battle. After he finished speaking, he said formally, "That's all!"

The voices of the eight great Patriarchs could be heard from within, engaging in conversation.

"Reinales, your clan has always been in the Infernal Realm. You should be familiar with its experts. Have you heard of this 'Phusro'?"

"Phusro? I've never heard of a person in the Infernal Realm who went by this name."

"No matter what, if he has a weapon-type Sovereign artifact, he is definitely a Sovereign's Emissary!"

"So what if he is a Sovereign's Emissary? If he dares act wildly against our eight great clans and really forces us, we can just kill him...as long as we aren't the first to attack, the Sovereign behind him won't blame us!"

Bulo, hearing this, couldn't help but be secretly startled.

However, Bulo also knew that of the eight Patriarchs of their eight great clans, seven of them were Sovereign's Emissaries, with the eighth not being a Sovereign's Emissary but still being in possession of a Sovereign artifact. In fact, the eighth was actually the most powerful of them all.

After all...

The Patriarchs of the Four Divine Beasts clan also had Sovereign's artifacts.

Given that the eight great clans to dare act against the Four Divine Beasts clan, how could they not have sufficient power of their own?

"How long will it be before I, too, have a Sovereign artifact?" Bulo thought to himself. However, he understood that even if the eight Patriarchs didn't have Sovereign artifacts, they were still incredibly strong. It was precisely because they were so strong...

That they were noticed and valued, and received Sovereign artifacts.

In Bulo's mind...

The eight Patriarchs were high and lofty figures. Indeed, it was only natural for a Sovereign's Emissary to be far above other people.

"Don't rashly make new enemies!" A somewhat hoarse voice rang out in a rebuke from within the palace. "There's no need for us to fear that Phusro anyhow. Right now, I'm more suspicious about another person."

"Bulo." The voice came from within.

Bulo immediately bowed.

"Let me ask you this. When you saw that Linley, you, too, believed him to be a God? You didn't sense any hint of a Highgod aura?" The hoarse voice in the palace said.

"Yes. I couldn't sense a thing. I sent out my divine sense, but could only sense that he was a God." Bulo said.

That hoarse voice rang out again. "Right. I am very familiar with Bulo's power. Your Ashcroft clan specializes in the soul to begin with, while Bulo is one of the supreme members of your clan, and has reached a very high level of accomplishment with regards to the soul. The number of people in the entire Infernal Realm who could hide their strength and prevent Bulo from realizing it can be counted on one hand. Someone with this level of power...shouldn't be weaker than me. If Linley really was this formidable, it would be simple for him to kill Bulo."

"But he didn't! And in fact, it was that Phusro who saved him."

"I have a suspicion! I suspect that this Linley really is just a God! The reason why his soul is so tough is that he has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!" The hoarse voice said.

"He really is just a God? Patriarch Boleyn, don't jest like that." Someone immediately said.

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“That he really is a God?” Buló, hearing this from outside the hall, also felt that this was unbelievable.

The voices of the eight Patriarch’s continued to ring out from within the hall.

“I’m not joking. Think about it closely. Over the course of all these years, since when has anyone in the Four Divine Beasts clan been capable of using this technique of aura hiding for launching sneak attacks? It has never happened! It wasn’t that they didn’t want to do it; it was that they weren’t capable of it!”

That hoarse voice continued, “My Boleyn clan, the Ashcroft clan, and the Edric clan are all famous for our extremely high level of ability pertaining to the soul. To hide one’s aura to a level where even we can’t discover it...hmpf, how many experts in the entire Infernal Realm can be capable of it?”

“If Linley was at such a level, there is no way Buló could’ve returned to us alive!”

The hoarse voice continued, “Thus, there’s only a single explanation. Linley himself really is a God. Naturally, there’s no way anyone would discover a ‘Highgod’ aura coming from him.”

The other clan leaders weren’t fools either. They had all been stunned by the astonishing strength Linley had displayed, so none of them had dared to pursue this line of thought. But now that Patriarch Boleyn was pointing it out, as they carefully considered this line of reasoning, they felt they suddenly understood as well!

All of the clan leaders were stunned.

“Linley is most likely a God. However, how can his attacks be so powerful? I hear that his Gravitational Space ability is so strong that most Highgods are completely unable to resist it. Even Six Star Fiends will have their souls affected, resulting in them being easily slaughtered!”

“Right. In battle, Linley is not weaker than a Seven Star Fiend.”

An ancient voice rang out, “Then the only explanation is that this Linley’s level of comprehension with regards to the profound mysteries of the Laws is too powerful. I predict...that he has already mastered and fused five of the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth! Otherwise, there’s no way a God could have this level of power.”

The amount of power Linley had displayed was, indeed, at this level.

But what they didn’t know was that Linley had actually only fused three types. However, through the assistance of the ‘black stone’ as well as the unique method of utilizing the Law possessed by the violet amethyst beast, allowing his gravitational pull to become more than a hundred times stronger...Linley’s power naturally was comparable to someone who had fused five types of profound mysteries.

“A God who has fused five profound mysteries?”

All of the clan leaders in the hall were completely stunned.

“I expect that the reason this Linley hasn’t become a Highgod is because he wants to fuse the mysteries, one step at a time. I imagine that he is currently slowly fusing the sixth profound mysteries. The day he becomes a Highgod will also be the very same day that he finishes completely fusing all six profound mysteries!” The hoarse voice rang out. “This Linley, I must admit...has tremendous willpower and tremendous ambition!”

The result of their discussion was...the eight Patriarchs were all stunned.

After all, generally speaking, when experts trained, fusing the profound mysteries of a Law was simply too hard. Thus, they all decided to become Highgods as soon as possible, then slowly fuse the profound mysteries.

A sharp voice rang out, “He is only a God, and yet already possesses such astonishing power. If he reaches the Highgod level, and reaches the level of perfection in the Laws....then he will be at the peak of his power! If one of the Patriarchs of the Four Divine Beasts clan is courageous enough to bestow a Sovereign artifact upon him, then this person, with his Sovereign artifact, could dominate us all!”

When a person reached perfect and became a Paragon of a Law, that person would have terrifying power!

When matched with a Sovereign artifact...that person could be said to be undefeatable by all aside from Sovereigns.

“This Linley...is actually this formidable.” Buluo, still listening from outside the hall, was terrified as well. “But it makes sense. If he, theoretically, is just a God, and yet is still capable of using such a terrifying Gravitational Space, he has to have fused at least five profound mysteries. He definitely is currently gaining insights on the sixth. Once he fuses them and becomes a Paragon...”

The number of Highgod Paragons was even lower than the number of Sovereigns.

Every single one of them was a glorious person of their generation, supreme amongst supreme experts!

“This Linley cannot be allowed to live!” A low, rumbling voice shouted angrily. “As we can now see, this Linley might break through at any moment and fuse six profound mysteries. By then...it would be perfectly normal for the Patriarchs of the Four Divine Beasts clan to be willing to give up one of their Sovereign artifacts to him. By then, we will be doomed!”

“If that really happens, even the Sovereigns wouldn’t be willing to help us!”

The eight Patriarchs were immediately filled with shock and rage.

Sovereigns were lofty beings. The Emissaries of the Sovereigns were nothing more than their ‘subjects’, and Sovereigns usually didn’t care too much about the affairs of their Emissaries. As long as an Emissary was capable of carrying out the duties assigned, that was enough.

But there was one type of person who was different!

A Highgod Paragon. Even Sovereigns would be willing to lower themselves to solemnly ask a Paragon to be an Emissary.

The Patriarchs of the eight great clans all felt their hearts clench slightly. Good heavens. They had never imagined that the Four Divine Beasts clan, silently and soundlessly, would actually produce such an incredibly talented figure. If this was permitted to continue, the repercussions would be unthinkable!

“This Linley must be killed!” A furious shout came from within the hall.

“The war between us and the Four Divine Beasts clan cannot be permitted to continue like this. We must accelerate it!”

“There’s no need to pay any attention to that other Sovereign’s Emissary. Our greatest threat right now is Linley. We have to seize the opportunity to execute him. No matter what the cost, no matter what sacrifices we must make, we must execute him!”

Originally, the eight great clans hadn’t truly spent much time thinking about Linley. Now that they did, they realized that he was a tremendous threat to them, a threat so great as to cause them to panic. After all, even throughout all four of the Higher Planes, the birth of every single supreme Paragon was an event that would shake all the planes.

The Skyrite Mountains. Bloodbath Gorge.

Emanuel and Forhan were waiting at the Azure Dragon Palace. Right at this moment, a figure streaked past the skies, flying directly into the Bloodbath Gorge and landing in front of the Azure Dragon Palace. This man with long, unbound azure hair was the Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan, ‘Gislason’.

“Eh?” The Grand Elder looked outside the window, puzzled. Emanuel and Forhan immediately turned to look as well.

Gislason strode in with a smile. “Little Sister.”

“Patriarch.” Emanuel and Forhan immediately saluted.

“You are here as well? Good. Then there’s no need to send someone to find you.” Gislason chortled as he walked to the throne, seating himself. He grinned towards the Grand Elder, “Little sister, do you know that in the battle Linley and Emanuel engaged in, two Seven Star Fiends of the other side died.”

Gislason chortled as he looked at Emanuel. “Emanuel, I heard that afterwards, yet another Seven Star Fiends attacked you and Linley. Tell me about the results.”

The news Gislason had received had come from their intelligence agents.

Because both sides had used Sovereign’s Might in that battle, the three Six Star Fiend survivors of the Azure Dragon clan had immediately scattered and fled. Buluo had pursued Emanuel and had also chased towards Linley...

Naturally, the Six Star Fiends had fled in the opposite direction.

And thus, only Linley, Emanuel, Buluo, and that Phusro knew what had happened between them afterwards.

“Patriarch.” Emanuel immediately knelt down, sobbing, “My divine water clone was destroyed. Our enemy was Buluo...I used a drop of Sovereign’s Might, but Linley didn’t use his, nor did he help me.”

“What’s this all about?” Gislason couldn’t help but frown.

“Patriarch, back then, Linley and I...” Emanuel immediately began to retell the story in detail anew. However, he naturally changed some of the details in the words, making it sound as though Linley wanted to harm him.

“What did you just say? A Sovereign artifact!” Gislason said, shocked.

“Emanuel, did you say a Sovereign artifact?” The Grand Elder was shocked as well.

“Ye...yes?” Emanuel was stunned.

“Why didn’t you tell me earlier?” The Grand Elder said angrily.

Prior to this, when Emanuel had been telling this tale to the Grand Elder, he had only said that an expert had stopped Bulo. He didn’t mention the Sovereign artifact.

“Is...is that very important?” Emanuel didn’t understand.

“What was his name?” Gislason asked hurriedly.

Emanuel still clearly remembered the conversation between Linley and Phusro. He immediately said, “That person was named Phusro.”

“Phusro?” The Grand Elder was somewhat puzzled.

Gislason was momentarily stunned as well, but then he began to laugh. He immediately said, “Little sister, come, make a trip with me.”

“Yes, Elder Brother.” The Grand Elder immediately followed him. Patriarch Gislason and the Grand Elder immediately left the Azure Dragon palace, leaving Emanuel and Forhan behind in the palace, completely confused.

“Father, what’s this all about?” Emanuel said.

“Could it be that the Patriarch knows that person?” Forhan didn’t fully understand either.

The Skyrise Mountains. Within the gorge.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were currently together. Linley’s original body was still on the way back, and so this was naturally just a clone Linley. As for Delia and Bebe, they had already gone and come back from the city of Meer.

“Bebe, how did it feel, to go out on an excursion? From the looks of it, it seems as though you had quite a bit of fun.” Linley laughed.

“Of course I feel great after going out for a trip.” Bebe rubbed his nose and laughed. “However, the reason I look so happy isn’t because I went on a trip. Rather...Boss, I’ve already mastered the fifth profound mystery of the Laws of Darkness.”

Linley was startled.

“Boss, you and I were competing, y’know. How about you?” Bebe asked smugly.

“Uh...” Linley couldn’t help but shake his head and laugh. “I fell behind. I’m still trapped at the bottleneck for the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’, and have yet to break through.”

“Hmph. Hmph.” Bebe laughed smugly.

“Look at the two of you.” Delia cover her mouth, starting to laugh as well. “You are even going to compete in this. You are like a pair of children.”

“Well, we have nothing better to do.” Bebe smirked in response.

Linley laughed, “Delia, Bebe, the two of you viewed Emanuel with disfavor, yes?” As Linley spoke, he set up his Godrealm, completely sealing off sound from the outside.”

“Right. I hate that guy.” Bebe said hurriedly. “Last time, he wanted to steal your Coiling Dragon ring.”

“And he wants to kill you.” Delia couldn’t help but turn grave. “Also, didn’t you say that for this mission, he forced you into accompanying him?”

Linley began to laugh. “You don’t need to worry any longer. Even if he wants to kill me, he doesn’t have the ability to do so. Delia, Bebe, it’d be hard for him to even kill the two of you.”

“What’s this?” Bebe and Delia were both shocked.

“This time, on our mission, the one he wanted me to go on...the result was that he died.” Linley laughed. “His most powerful divine water clone was finished. The body that he has left is very weak.”

“He’s really dead? Woohoo!” Bebe shouted out excitedly.

“You encountered a powerful foe? How about your clone? Are you alright?” Delia asked hurriedly. Delia was worried each time Linley went out on a mission. After all, the war between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans meant that during every single mission, the squads were dancing between the edges of life and death.

“Of course I’m fine.” Linley laughed.

Linley suddenly frowned, then turned and looked towards the skies. He saw that in mid-air, there were four figures flying over at high speed. Linley released his Godrealm, and the four landed directly in front of Linley.

“Elder Linley.” The four bowed as they spoke.

“What is it?” Linley asked.

The leader said respectfully, “Elder Linley, we have come on the orders of the four clan leaders to summon you to the Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts.”

“The four clan leaders?” Linley was stunned.

He had been in the Infernal Realm for so long, but he had only met Patriarch Gislason of his own Azure Dragon clan. As for the other three clan leaders, he had never seen them before. Now, the four Patriarchs were summoning him? Why?

“Elder Linley, please hurry. The four clan leaders are all waiting for you at the Grand Palace.” The leader urged.

“Right.” Linley nodded.

Linley immediately turned towards Delia and Bebe, laughing as he nodded towards them. “I need to make a trip.” And then, he immediately flew into the air. Those four warriors followed directly behind Linley, as the five of them flew in a line towards Bloodbath Gorge.

Moments later.

Linley arrived at Bloodbath Gorge. He immediately saw the distant Azure Dragon Palace. “It’s actually the Grand Palace. I’ve never been to the Grand Palace before.” Bloodbath Gorge had five palaces in total. The

Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts was the place where the clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan went to discuss major matters with each other.

But today...

The Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts had especially opened its doors for Linley.

The Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts was more than a hundred meters tall, and its four walls were filled with carvings of four different divine beasts. The entire Grand Palace was an extremely stately, solemn place. At the gate to the Grand Palace, there were warriors of Bloodbath Gorge standing guard.

“Elder Linley.” The guards saluted respectfully.

Linley laughed and nodded, then strode into the Grand Palace. “Rumble...” Behind Linley, the gates to the Grand Palace shut themselves.

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Linley looked about carefully, but there wasn't a single person present in this main hall of the first floor of the Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts.

"Linley, come to the second floor." A voice rang out in Linley's ears.

"Patriarch." Linley recognized this voice as being Gislason's, and he immediately entered a side room to the main hall, which had a staircase that led upwards into the second floor. Climbing up the staircase, Linley arrived at the second floor of the Grand Palace.

The second floor was clearly much smaller than the main hall on the first floor.

There was an enormous round table placed in the center of the hall, and there were a total of six figures seated around the table. Linley recognized only two of the six figures; one was the Patriarch, while the other was the Grand Elder.

"Judging from their clothes and their aura, the other woman seated around the table should be the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan." Linley inspected them one by one.

Azure Dragon clan. Vermillion Bird clan. White Tiger clan. Black Tortoise clan. All four clans, without question, had their own unique, bizarre auras and appearances. He could recognize them at a single glance. At the round table, the Azure Dragon clan had two representatives, the Black Tortoise clan had two representatives, and the White Tiger and Vermillion Bird clans also had one each.

"Linley, sit." Suddenly, the beautiful woman from the Vermillion Bird clan laughed calmly.

The others all revealed smiles towards Linley as well, and Gislason laughed, "Linley, no need to stand on ceremony. When meeting with you here, we can be a bit more casual. Go ahead and sit."

"Yes." Linley couldn't help but feel a warm feeling in his heart.

Linley knew that these people were the highest level figures of the Four Divine Beasts clan, the sons and daughters of those four Sovereigns.

"Linley, the reason we asked you to come was to ask you regarding that Phusro." Gislason said.

"Phusro?" Linley was startled.

So the clan had found out about the relationship between himself and Phusro so quickly!

One of the men present wore a white robe, and on the white robe, there were some unusual patterns that made it look as though it was made from the fur of a tiger. This man had a grim, callous face, but he currently had a hint of a smile as well. "Phusro has a Sovereign artifact, but we've never heard of him..."

Linley laughed to himself.

Up until a few centuries ago, Phusro had been just a pitiable little kitten in Elquin's arms. Who would have known him?

“Linley, this Phusro is a Sovereign’s Emissary. There should be no mistaking this, right?” A large man said in a low, rumbling voice. This man’s body was even taller than the members of the Barbary clan. Linley knew that this person had to be one of the two leaders of the Black Tortoise clan.

“He is indeed a Sovereign’s Emissary. He should have only become one a few centuries ago.” Linley replied.

Around the circular table, the leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan all stared at each other, excitement in their eyes.

“Which Sovereign?” Gislason asked hurriedly.

“I’m not certain. However, it is a Sovereign of Fire.” Linley said.

The Grand Elder, by Gislason’s side, also asked hurriedly, “Linley, do you know why this Phusro saved you? Was it because the two of you have a relationship with each other, or because he was acting on the orders of the Sovereign?”

“Actually...I’m puzzled about this as well.” Linley said.

“Oh?”

The six looked at Linley, listening attentively.

Although Linley didn’t understand what the six were interested in with regards to this conversation, there were some things which didn’t need to be kept secret and which he could reveal. “In truth, this Phusro and I have only met a single time. Although we can be considered friends, our relationship isn’t that deep.”

“I can understand why he saved me when he happened to be there, but he actually threatened Buluo and threatened Buluo’s clan, saying that they were not permitted to act against me.” Linley laughed.

The six people around the table all frowned.

“He has a pre-existing friendship with you?” Gislason was somewhat frustrated. “It seems he wasn’t acting on the orders of a Sovereign to protect Linley. There isn’t much of a connection between the Sovereign and Linley.”

“Hard to say.” The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan rebutted. “Phusro threatened them. Perhaps...”

“Enough. Don’t have any extravagant hopes.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan let out a long sigh. “If the Sovereign had the intention of protecting Linley, he would have sent someone directly to the eight great clans and convey his Decree. With a Sovereign’s Decree...the eight great clans definitely wouldn’t dare to touch Linley. There’s no need for him to go to as much trouble as this Phusro has. Clearly, Phusro’s rescue of Linley didn’t have much to do with the Sovereign.”

“Alas...” Gislason couldn’t help but lower his head and sigh.

The looks on the faces of the others turned unhappy as well.

Linley, seeing this, couldn’t help but feel astonished. However, listening to their words, Linley began to understand. “So they were actually hoping that I had some sort of a relationship with a Sovereign.” When Linley thought of the situation of his clan, he fully understood.

Ever since those four ancestors of theirs had died, the Four Divine Beasts clan had lacked a Sovereign to rely on. Thus, even those eight great clans dared to abuse them.

They knew that a Sovereign's Emissary had rescued Linley, and so they had hoped...that this Sovereign's Emissary had come on the Sovereign's orders to rescue Linley.

If that were the case, then it would also be possible that in the future, the Sovereign might, for Linley's sake, help out the Four Divine Beasts clan.

"Their hopes were just extinguished." Linley said to himself.

"Forget it. Everyone, don't be discouraged. At least we have a Sovereign's Emissary as our ally now." The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed calmly. "In addition, it isn't completely impossible that the Sovereign's Emissary came on the orders of his Sovereign."

Linley looked at those six people around the round table, and he couldn't help but feel a surge of grief in his heart.

How could the Four Divine Beasts clan have fallen to such dire straits?

These clan leaders were all pining for a Sovereign to stand behind them! However, the four ancestors were all dead now. As for the other Sovereigns, why would they be so bored as to go help the Four Divine Beasts clan for no reason?

"Linley, I'd like to ask you something. Are you a God, or are you a Highgod?" The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed as she looked at Linley. "To be honest, I can't detect any hint of a Highgod aura coming from you."

Linley couldn't help but look at his Patriarch.

Quite a few people had already asked this question.

"Linley is a God." Gislason said hurriedly. "This is a secret. It's enough that we know this secret. Do not spread it out." The people present were all the highest level members of the Four Divine Beasts clan, so it didn't matter if they knew.

"Still just a God? Haha, how is it that you, a God, are able to kill Seven Star Fiends?"

The atmosphere of the room grew lively again as everyone began to discuss Linley.

Linley, faced with the questions from these clan leaders, was only able to give some general answers.

"Gravitational Space?" The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan said in amazement, his sword-shaped eyebrows rising. "With a simple Gravitational Space, you are actually able to make it so that most Highgods are unable to fly?" A Gravitational Space was normally a very ordinary technique.

Linley had only developed his own version, thanks to the intentional guidance provided by the juvenile amethyst beast.

"Gravitational Space?"

Suddenly, the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan let out a cry of shock, then stared at Linley, asking hurriedly, "Linley, are you capable of changing the direction of gravity within your Gravitational Space?" The astonishment of the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan caused the other people present to be mystified.

"Quick, tell me." The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird urged.

Linley felt completely puzzled. This was a very simple thing. Why had the Patriarch lost her cool like this?

“Right.” Linley nodded and admitted it.

“Haha...”

The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan began to laugh, laugh with exceeding happiness. She looked at Linley. “Linley, you should have learned your Gravitational Space technique from the Amethyst Mountains, right?”

Linley was shocked.

How did she know?

Seeing the look of shock on Linley’s face, the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan began to laugh smugly again.

“Elder Sister, hurry up and tell us what is making you so happy.” The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan urged, and the others looked towards her as well.

The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird was all smiles as she responded. “Everyone, there is no way that this unique Gravitational Space which Linley knows can be developed simply through training. When my mother was alive, she had once mentioned a Sovereign of Destruction to me!”

“Sovereign of Destruction?” Everyone’s eyes lit up.

Linley stared at her as well.

“Right.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan nodded. “This Sovereign of Destruction had the innate ability to control and change the direction of gravity, and also exert control over a person’s soul. This Sovereign is extremely powerful...and my mother said that this Sovereign of Destruction was the Sovereign of the Redbud Continent!”

Everyone was stunned.

Linley stared, slack-jawed.

“Aside from this Sovereign of Destruction, there shouldn’t be anyone else capable of utilizing Linley’s type of Gravitational Space.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan said confidently. “Oh, right. I also heard that this Sovereign of Destruction has a son. Aside from him and his son, no one else knows it.”

Linley was completely stupefied.

“Sovereign? Son?”

Many things flashed through Linley’s mind, and many things he didn’t understand were suddenly made clear. “That juvenile amethyst beast...could he be the son of the Sovereign?”

Immediately, the clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan stared towards Linley.

They were like people who were drowning that had seen a stalk of straw they could clutch onto for survival!

They were incomparably arrogant, and felt themselves to be the favored ones of the heavens. However, after their four Sovereigns had fallen, they discovered...that the Four Divine Beasts clan had instantly fallen into dire straits, and could be wiped out at any moment.

They were hoping that a Sovereign would be willing to step forward and help them! But none ever had!

“Linley!” Gislason’s face was covered with smiles. “You know the Redbud Sovereign?”

“No...I don’t know him.” Linley shook his head.

“How could you not?” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan began to laugh. “You learned your Gravitational Space technique from the Amethyst Mountains, right?”

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“That’s right. The Amethyst Mountains is the place where the Redbud Sovereign was born. That’s his home!” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan sighed in amazement. “The power of that Sovereign is exceedingly strong. If he is willing to stand out and say but a single word, those eight great clans will immediately be so terrified that they would flee.”

Linley still felt completely stunned. So the Amethyst Mountains was the resting place of a Sovereign.

“My Gravitational Space was taught to me by a juvenile amethyst beast named ‘Reisgem’.” Linley said hurriedly.

“Reisgem?”

The clan leaders all shook their head, indicating they hadn’t heard the name before.

“I haven’t heard of him either.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed. “But from the sound of it, he’s most likely that son of the Sovereign.”

“This Reisgem is a Commander of Purgatory. You don’t recognize him?” Linley was puzzled.

“A Purgatory Commander?” The six people around the table were all startled.

“A person who becomes a Purgatory Commander does so to participate in the Planar Wars.” Gislason said. “Our Four Divine Beasts clan doesn’t get involved in the Planar Wars, so we don’t pay too much attention to it. In addition, Purgatory Commanders often change. No one knows who is currently a Commander.”

Linley nodded.

“Linley, you can go back for now.” Gislason laughed.

“Right. You can go back. From today onwards, you don’t need to get involved in the matters of Bloodbath Gorge. Go back and train hard, and then, after you reach the Highgod level, we’ll see.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed as well.

Although Linley was still rather puzzled, he still bowed. “Yes.” And then, he left by himself.”

After Linley left.

“Haha...” Gislason began to laugh.

“Haha...” Immediately, everyone else began to laugh as well, their faces covered in smiles.

The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan sighed emotionally, “It’s been so many years. Our Four Divine Beasts clan finally sees a ray of hope!”

“Right! We finally have a ray of hope!” Gislason sighed as well.

Given the glorious former days of the Four Divine Beasts clan, how could they be willing to forever hide within the Skyrite Mountains? Although the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture had entered into an agreement with the eight great clans, causing them to be forbidden from attacking within the Skyrite Mountains...all this meant was that the roots and foundation of their clan was protected.

As for returning to their former glory...

They had to have the support of either an invincible Highgod Paragon, or that of a Sovereign.

“The Redbud Sovereign.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed. “Over the past ten thousand years, we haven’t seen any signs of hope at all. But today, we finally do...given that the Redbud Sovereign was willing to pass his ultimate technique to Linley, the relationship between him and Linley has to be a deep one.”

“Elder Brother.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed as she looked at Gislason. “You have to protect this Linley and take care of him. We need to rely on him to connect with the Redbud Sovereign.”

“Don’t worry.”

Gislason began to laugh as well. “I guarantee that nothing will happen to Linley.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 37, Calmness and Savagery

Bloodbath Gorge.

Emanuel and Forhan were together.

“I have a bad feeling...” Forhan said with a frown.

“Father, what is it?” Emanuel said hurriedly.

Forhan said, “Look at how much the Patriarch cared about that Sovereign’s Emissary. Most likely, he wants to draw that Sovereign’s Emissary closer to us. After all, our Four Divine Beasts clan is currently in dire straits. If that’s the case...Linley most likely won’t be punished.”

“Won’t be punished?” Emanuel was frantic.

He had wanted to deal with Linley this entire time. This time, he ‘wanted to steal a chicken, but instead just lost the bait’. Even his most powerful divine water clone had been destroyed. The sort of rage this engendered had all immediately and naturally been transferred onto Linley.

He wasn’t strong enough to deal with Linley, so he wanted to find some other methods.

“How can Linley not be punished?” Emanuel said hurriedly. “The Grand Elder already agreed.”

“Shut your mouth.” Forhan frowned and shouted.

Emanuel immediately didn’t dare to make a sound. Forhan took a deep breath. After being quiet for a moment, allowing the room to fall into silence, Forhan finally said in a soft voice, “As I see it, it’s not too likely that the clan will punish Linley. It’ll be up to us.”

“What method do we have?” Emanuel said hurriedly.

“There are many methods.” Forhan couldn’t help but narrow his eyes, and he laughed coldly. “This time, someone rescued Linley. I refuse to believe that in the future, he’ll be so lucky as to be rescued again.”

“Father, are you saying...” Emanuel laughed.

“I know each and every one of the Elders of the clan. It won’t be too hard to set up a trap for him to fall into. There will be plenty of opportunities!” Forhan said confidently. “During a battle, if we play a few tricks...hmp! When experts are battling each other, even the slightest distraction can be enough to take his life!”

“In particular, if our side loses all of our Six Star Fiends in a battle and there are no eyewitnesses remaining, we can kill him directly.” Forhan laughed coldly. “Even if he cries out at the injustice of it all, who will believe him?”

Emanuel’s face immediately broke out into a smile.

“How can a junior descendant like him be worthy of the Azure Dragon ring of our ancestor?” Forhan snickered. “Even with the Azure Dragon ring, he’s only an ordinary Seven Star Fiend. If I were to hold the Azure Dragon ring...I would be much more useful to the clan than he is!”

Indeed. If Forhan were to fly out with Linley, Linley wouldn’t suspect that Forhan would suddenly attack him. When flying normally, Linley would be in his human form...once Forhan truly attacked, the results would be easily imagined.

Linley could cry out at the injustice, but without any witnesses, so what if he did?

Forhan could simply maintain that it was an enemy who had done it. There was nothing Linley could do at all.

“Forhan. Emanuel.” A voice rang out.

“Mother’s here.” Forhan hurriedly rose to his feet, and Emanuel rose, standing to the side respectfully.

“Creaaaak.” The hall door swung open. The Grand Elder, wearing that silver mask, directly walked in. She looked calmly at the two of them. “Forhan, Emanuel. The matter of punishing Linley comes to an end, here and now.”

Emanuel felt shock in his heart. “It really as Father predicted it. However...although it might not be possible now, in the future, we’ll still have our chance.”

Carrying out missions involved walking a fine line between life and death.

If one’s partners were to secret caused trouble, the chance of survival would be very low.

“From today onwards, Linley will depart from Bloodbath Gorge. He will not take on any assignments from Bloodbath Gorge.” The Grand Elder said calmly.

Forhan and Emanuel were stunned.

They were utterly stupefied!

“Mother, how can that be?” Forhan said hurriedly. “The rules of our clan state that each person can only retire after a thousand years. Linley hasn’t been in Bloodbath Gorge for very long. He’s far from reaching the thousand year mark.”

“Right. The rules of the clan can’t be broken.” Emanuel said frantically as well.

If Linley weren’t to take on assignments in Bloodbath Gorge, and instead remained in the Skyrite Mountains, there was no way at all for them to make Linley die...after all, no private battles were permitted within the Skyrite Mountains.

“This is the decision of the four clan leaders!” The Grand Elder said coldly.

Forhan and Emanuel, hearing these words, couldn’t help but be stunned. The Patriarch was the leader of their clan. The joint orders of the four clan leaders were completely unchangeable!

From that day onwards, Linley no longer needed to go to Bloodbath Gorge. He was able to calmly leave a peaceful life. Delia and Bebe, upon hearing this news, were extremely happy...and so, in such a peaceful manner, their life proceeded.

In the eyes of the Four Divine Beasts clan, Linley was their hope of a connection to the Redbud Sovereign!

But what Linley didn't know was...to the eight great clans, he was their greatest threat!

The Skyrite Mountains. Within the gorge.

There was a grassy yard in front of Linley's room, which had a stone table placed in the middle of it. The stone table had a bottle of wine atop it, and Linley was currently holding a book in his hands. Linley's four clones were all training, while his original body was enjoying the peace.

Delia walked out from her room, holding two plates of food in her hands. Seeing Linley reading, she couldn't help but chuckle. She walked over, gently placing the plates down on the stone table.

"Eh?"

Linley suddenly smelled a fragrant odor, and he turned to look at the platter. His eyes couldn't help but to light up. "Delia, haha, it smells so delicious. Your culinary skills have improved greatly." As he spoke, he flipped the book shut.

He immediately went to go for a taste, and ate while praising, "Not bad, not bad. The taste is comparable to that of the restaurants in the cities."

"Far from it." Delia laughed, her face blushing. "This is based off of one of several cooking recipes I bought on my last trip to the city. The ingredients for these dishes, I acquired by asking those who went to the cities to buy for me."

Delia sat down across from him, resting her chin on her hands as she watched Linley eat.

As Linley ate, he suddenly began to chuckle.

"Why are you laughing like an idiot?" Delia couldn't help but smile as well.

"I'm just thinking!" Linley let out a sigh. "Training in the Laws, adventuring in the boundless Infernal Realm...then, when free, reading some books, drinking some fine wine, then eating the delicious food prepared by my wife. This sort of life is simply...haha, perfect!" Linley laughed, absolutely delighted.

Delia laughed as well.

"Linley, if you always want to live such a comfortable life, you can, you know." Delia said. "As long as in the future, you don't go to Bloodbath Gorge, that'll be enough. I keep on having the feeling that the Four Divine Beasts clan care too much about their face...if it was me, I would've ordered the Four Divine Beasts clan to remain locked in the mountain. The members of the clan would all live quiet lives. Why go battle against those eight great clans?"

Linley put down his chopsticks.

"Enough, Delia." Linley laughed. "Life, especially for those who possess unending life, is all about face. The glory of the clan is particularly valued. Unless it is absolutely necessary...the clan won't choose to retreat into the mountains and completely turtle up."

Delia laughed. "It doesn't matter to me, as long as you don't have to go to Bloodbath Gorge." In Delia's heart, she didn't feel too much of a sense of belonging to the Four Divine Beasts clan. All she cared about was...that Linley had to be safe.

"Hehe..." Linley chuckled.

"Come, you have a taste as well. This flavor really is excellent." Linley laughed as he spoke.

In the blink of an eye, a hundred years of this sort of life passed. With Linley by her side, Delia naturally didn't feel bored at all. Every day, her face was wreathed in smiles, and she also learned how to cook one delicacy after another, to Linley's great delight, as he could now often taste new food.

As for Bebe...

He occasionally would be with Linley, or joke around with the members of the Yulan branch, but when bored, Bebe would still join the clan's squadrons and head out to the city for a stroll.

Bloodbath Gorge. The Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts. The four clan leaders were assembled there.

"It's only been a century!" Gislason's face was gloomy.

"In the past century, it seems as though those eight great clans have gone mad! They don't care about casualties at all, nor about wasting Sovereign's Might. They insist on killing our people!" The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan said furiously.

"In the past century, our Vermillion Bird clan has lost three Elders. The rest of you?" The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan said, a long, gloomy look on her face.

"Our White Tiger clan has lost four Elders!" The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan's words held boundless rage. "Third Brother, how about your Black Tortoise clan?"

The Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan let out a low sigh as well. "Our Black Tortoise clan's losses have been severe as well. We lost two Elders. It has only been a century!"

"Elder Brother." The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan looked towards Gislason.

"Our Azure Dragon clan has lost three Elders." Gislason sighed. "By my calculations, in a short century, our Four Divine Beasts clan has lost a total of twelve Elders!"

Based on how things had previously progressed in their war of attrition, the loss of twelve Elders was something which would happen in a thousand years.

But now, they reached that number in a mere century.

"Those eight great clans have gone mad." The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan said angrily. "In the past century, each time, they'll send out three or four Seven Star Fiends. And each time, one of them will be holding a Sovereign's Might! They don't begrudge using the Sovereign's Might at all, if it means they can kill all our people."

"They've lost quite a bit in their madness as well." Gislason said. "Our Azure Dragon clan alone has killed four of their Elders."

"Our Vermillion Bird clan has killed three."

The four clan leaders all reported their results.

"In the past thousand years, the losses of the eight great clans have been even greater than ours. They lost fifteen of their Elders." Gislason said.

"But the eight great clans have the advantage of numbers." The Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan said in a low voice. "Ever since our four ancestors died, our Four Divine Beasts clan has lost, in total, nearly a hundred and twenty Seven Star Fiends...now, our entire Four Divine Beasts clan has, all combined, roughly

around a hundred surviving Seven Star Fiends. But the enemy? They have more than three hundred Seven Star Fiends in total!”

Any of the eight great clans could compare with the Azure Dragon clan in terms of experts.

Early on, the Azure Dragon clan had over sixty Seven Star Fiends as well.

The eight great clans originally had nearly five hundred Seven Star Fiends as well. After so many years of warfare, they had killed nearly a hundred and twenty Seven Star Fiends of the Four Divine Beasts clan, while they themselves had lost more than a hundred.

But despite that, the combined forces of the eight great clans still numbered more than three hundred Seven Star Fiends?

If this sort of attrition continued...

Even after all of the experts of the Four Divine Beasts clan were dead, the enemy would probably still have two hundred or more Elders. In addition, the enemy also had many supreme experts. The Patriarchs of the eight great clans were all extremely powerful figures!

“Madness. Madness! They ignore the cost in Sovereign’s Might and in deaths of Seven Star Fiends. They’ve all gone mad!” The Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan said unhappily.

“What’s going on? In the past ten thousand years, they’ve never been as wild as this. Why have they gone so mad in the past century?” Gislason simply couldn’t understand it.

But how could the leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan have imagined...that the reason these eight great clans had gone mad and sent out three or four Elders to join forces each time was, first of all, in the hopes that when they ran into Linley, they would be able to kill him.

And the second reason was, they wanted to speed up the pace! They didn’t dare to waste more time, for fear that as time went on, Linley might suddenly break through and become that which they feared the most; a ‘Highgod Paragon’.

Although the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans had entered a wild state, the Skyrite Mountains were still very quiet and calm. Linley lived this sort of calm life with no struggles, while his four clones constantly improved as well.

After his retirement from Bloodbath Gorge, two hundred years had passed.

In the past two hundred years, Linley had made the greatest improvements in his divine water clone, which could in fact be described as having made ‘monstrous gains’. The speed at which he gained new insights into the profound mysteries was absolutely ‘astonishing’. It was on a full level faster than even his divine earth clone and his divine wind clone.

Naturally, it was countless times faster than his divine fire clone.

By now, his divine water clone had already reached the God level long ago, and had mastered three profound mysteries and was currently working on the fourth...but actually, if one closely considered it, this wasn’t too astonishing. After all, after the Ancestral Baptism, Linley had naturally understood one of the profound mysteries.

His divine wind clone had gained mastery into a sixth profound mystery, but since the Laws of the Wind had nine profound mysteries in total, it was harder to advance in.

As for his divine fire clone, it was still working on the third profound mystery, advancing at a slow pace.

“Linley, your life is quite comfortable.” A loud laugh rang out.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were seated around a table, eating while chatting.

Linley turned to look. The person who had walked in was Elder Garvey.

“Garvey seems to have a rather unhappy look on his face. He’s worrying about something.” Linley could tell this at a single glance. For an expert such as Elder Garvey to so easily reveal his thoughts meant that something major had definitely occurred.”

“Elder Garvey.” Bebe was the first to welcome him happily. “Hurry on over. This is the first time my Boss cooked. Have a taste...it is so delicious, you could die!”

“Bebe.” Linley couldn’t help but feel his face heat up.

He clearly had done exactly as the cookbook described, but the difference in flavor between what he had cooked and what Delia cooked was...simply too vast. However, it wasn’t so bad as to cause someone to ‘die’.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 38, Most Powerful Attack

“Haha...” Elder Garvey couldn’t help but laugh. He immediately pointed at Linley and said, “Elder Linley, I didn’t imagine that you are able to cook. I have to taste your dishes.” Garvey walked over as he spoke.

Elder Garvey was going to eat?

If Elder Garvey was to eat, the terribleness of the food would definitely be spread throughout the clan.

“Elder Garvey.” Linley hurriedly stood up, blocking in front of Elder Garvey. Laughing, he said, “Elder Garvey, this is my first time cooking. There’s no need to taste it. Right. Judging from your face, it seems as though you are worrying about something?”

Linley hurriedly changed the topic. And indeed, as Linley did, Elder Garvey couldn’t help but let out a long sigh, then sit down to one side.

“What’s happened?” Linley asked.

Elder Garvey laughed bitterly. “Elder Linley, in the past two centuries, you haven’t gone to Bloodbath Gorge, have you?”

“Right.” Ever since he had been summoned by the four clan leaders and then instructed not to participate in Bloodbath Gorge, he hadn’t gone there a single time.”

“It’s only been two hundred years!” Elder Garvey seemed to have a belly full of resentment and pain. “Linley, do you know? In these two short centuries, our Azure Dragon clan has lost five Elders!”

“Five?!” Linley was shocked by this number.

The Azure Dragon clan usually lost two or three Elders in a thousand years. To lose five in two centuries...this was too significant.

“Factoring in what happened to Emanuel and Arhaus...our Azure Dragon clan only has twenty or so Elders who truly have the power of a Seven Star Fiend!” Elder Garvey said, his eyes turning moist. “My teacher lost his most powerful clone just yesterday on a mission. He no longer has a Seven Star Fiend level of power either.”

Linley couldn’t help but fall silent.

As for Delia and Bebe, it wasn’t appropriate for them to interject right now either.

“It’s only been ten thousand years. Ten thousand years ago, the Elders of the clan numbered more than sixty. In ten thousand short years, we’ve lost more than half!” Elder Garvey sighed. “Based on this sort of speed, the number of Elders in Bloodbath Gorge definitely won’t be enough. We’ll probably be recruited earlier this time.”

Normally, the Elders of Bloodbath Gorge were swapped out every thousand years.

However...

They were losing them at too fast a pace. As this continued, the number of Elders available in Bloodbath Gorge would be insufficient. Those idle Elders such as Garvey would have to go make up the numbers.

“What is going on? How could there be so many casualties?” Linley couldn’t understand it. “Defeating a Seven Star Fiend is easy, but killing a Seven Star Fiend is very hard.”

“The eight great clans have gone mad!”

Elder Garvey snorted angrily. “In the past two centuries, they’ve gone completely mad. Each battle, they’ll send out three or four Seven Star Fiends, and one of them will definitely be holding a Sovereign’s Might! Our Elders have barely any chance to survive each battle.

As Linley heard this, the look on his face couldn’t help but change.

“Why are the eight great clans acting like this?” Linley felt rather puzzled.

The eight great clans had never gone so mad before, but ever since that last battle of his, the eight great clans had gone mad.

“Could it be that it has something to do with me or Phusro? Or was this the original plan for the eight great clans all along?” Linley couldn’t help but speculate.

“Alright, Linley. I won’t disturb you any further. You need to train hard...originally, I thought that this battle between ourselves and the eight great clans would keep on dragging out. But now, it seems, the final battle between us will come soon!”

Elder Garvey finished his words, then immediately flew into the air and left, departing.

“The final battle?” Linley couldn’t help but mumble.

“Boss, what ‘final battle’?” Bebe’s eyes were shining.

“Don’t ask. Based on your current power, you aren’t qualified to participate. When one day you become a Highgod, then we’ll talk.” Linley laughed.

Once Bebe became a Highgod, given his innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’...he would be an absolutely monster.

“Uhhhh....” Bebe couldn’t help but pout. “I’ve only mastered five profound mysteries. I haven’t even gained a basic understanding of the sixth profound mystery. Grandpa Beirut is really...ugh. Why didn’t he give me that sixth soul slice fragment to me early on? Wouldn’t that be much easier?”

Both Linley and Delia laughed.

Bebe had currently mastered five profound mysteries. The first one was one which he had naturally understood upon becoming an adult. As for the other four, he had gained them from soul slice fragments that contained understandings of profound mysteries that was at the bottleneck level.

He had succeeded in taking this shortcut. To have Bebe gain insights on his own? Unlikely!

“Bebe, if you can’t gain any insights, you can go try fusing other mysteries.” Delia chortled as well. “Once you successfully fuse something, your power will improve greatly.”

“That’s not a bad idea. Although it’s a bit harder, I might just succeed.” Bebe grew animated. He immediately flew towards his own residence, and Linley and Delia both laughed.

“I wager that Bebe will be able to hold on for one year at most.” Linley laughed.

“A year? He might not even be able to hold on for half a year.” Delia laughed.

“I will definitely persevere for two years!” Bebe’s voice rang out from above. Linley and Delia glanced at each other, then both began to laugh. Linley then said solemnly, “Delia, just now, from what Garvey said, I feel some pressure...I plan to have my original body begin training again, starting today.”

“Alright.” Delia’s eyes became filled with worry as well. “I feel rather worried as well. The situation is growing worse and worse. Train hard. I won’t disturb you.”

Linley nodded and chuckled.

The eight great clans continued to act with wild abandon. One Elder after another of the eight great clans and the Four Divine Beasts clan fell, while rows on rows of Six Star Fiends died as well...the situation was unbearably grim. As for Linley’s four clones and his original body, they were all quietly training.

As he trained, time flowed on like water...

Ever since acquiring the ‘black stone’, Linley had treated his divine earth clone as his primary divine clone, whole-heartedly focusing on the Laws of the Earth.

When fusing profound mysteries, the further one advanced, the harder it became.

With regards to the Laws of the Earth, Linley had fused three types. He had attempted to fuse a fourth, but was completely unable to fuse the ‘Worldwalking’ technique with the other three profound mysteries. At the same time, Linley had also attempted to fuse the not-yet-mastered ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’ with the other three as well.

Within the gorge. Linley was currently together with Delia. Linley looked into the distance, clearly able to see quite a few clansmen. It had been three centuries since Linley had left Bloodbath Gorge.

“I’ve finally made a breakthrough.” Linley’s face was all smiles.

“Look at how pleased you are.” Delia laughed.

The greatest breakthrough he had made on this training session was that he had begun to link together and fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength with the Throbbing Pulse of the World. However, to fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength with the other three required that they had to all become as one.

“Of course I’m happy. Delia, this Profound Mysteries of Strength is something that can allow me to unleash my power more effectively.” Linley said hurriedly. “The Throbbing Pulse of the World can allow me to unleash material attacks as well. Once I fuse them...I can unleash the strength I have in Dragonform in a much more effective manner.”

His greatest advantage was his body!

The power of his body in Dragonform was such that with a single fist, he could block the most powerful sword attack of a Six Star Fiend. And that was just by relying on a simple punch. Once he included the might of the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’, the power would greatly increase.

But if he were to then fuse the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, the power would increase still further!

“Different profound mysteries are suited to different types of attacks. Thus, generally speaking, after fusing certain profound mysteries, one will develop an attack that allows one to best unleash one’s power.”

Linley sighed. "Seven Star Fiends have generally fused four types of profound mysteries, but some are specialized in fleeing, some are specialized in soul attacks, and some are specialized in material attacks. This is because...their fusion of profound mysteries is different!"

Delia nodded.

Prior to this, Linley had fused the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', the 'Essence of the Earth', and 'Gravitational Space', these three types of profound mysteries. These three profound mysteries, when combined with the 'black stone', created the 'Blackstone Prison', his most powerful technique.

But as for material attacks?

The profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth most suited for material attacks were the 'Profound Mysteries of Strength' and the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'.

The most suitable were the best.

"When these two profound mysteries are fused, my attacks in Dragonform will reach a new level." Linley said confidently. His strength in Dragonform was tremendous to begin with. He had a very good base. Once he fused these two profound mysteries...

It was frightening just to think about how powerful he would be.

Linley's 'Blackstone Prison' could be used to trap people, but his attack was too weak, and the energy in his body was only at the God level. He had to rely on his Dragonform...but although his strength was great, he still wasn't able to kill someone in one blow.

"Once I fuse these two profound mysteries, I'll first use my 'Blackstone Prison' to trap the enemy, and then give him a punch. Even if he doesn't die, he'll be badly injured." Linley was completely confident.

Delia laughed as she watched Linley grow so animated as he spoke.

"Boss!" Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Linley and Delia both turned, only to see Bebe fly over, beaming merrily. "Boss, I need to go out on a trip."

"Go out on a trip? To Meer City?" Linley laughed.

"Right. It's been quite a while since I've seen Tarosse, Dylin, and the others. I'll go visit them." Bebe mumbled. "I hear that Olivier has already left Meer City. He's gone out for an adventure. Who knows if he's still in Meer City."

"Fine, go then. Have a safe trip." Linley laughed.

"Heh heh, no worries." Bebe chortled and waved, then flew into the skies.

Linley suddenly had a thought. Ever since he had returned to the gorge, Delia hadn't made a single trip. Linley couldn't help but turn to look at Delia. "Delia, do you want to go out as well? How about this time, we'll go to Meer City together?"

"No rush." Delia shook her head. "Linley, you'd best focus on your training. After you've mastered your fusion of the Profound Mysteries of Strength and the Throbbing Pulse of the World, we can go together."

"Thank you." Linley said gratefully.

Delia just smiled at him.

Linley ignored the chaos that was happening in the outside world, focusing solely on his training. Occasionally, his original body would pause for a while to spend some time with Delia. After beginning the fusion of the *Profound Mysteries of Strength* and the *Throbbing Pulse of the World*, he continued to advance and improve...

As he trained, he barely noticed the passage of time.

In the blink of an eye, five hundred years had passed since he had left Bloodbath Gorge.

In the great gorge, the place where Linley lived.

Delia was seated quietly within her room, flipping through a book in her hands. Right at this moment...

“Haha...” Suddenly, loud laughter rang out from within the room.

Delia was startled, but then turned to look, overjoyed. She saw Linley, his long hair fluttering loosely, walk in with great strides. As soon as he saw Delia, he laughed, “Delia, I finally broke through. After five hundred years, I’ve finally broke through.”

“What did you break through in?” Delia hurriedly stood up.

“I’ve finally mastered the *Profound Mysteries of Strength*. And, I’ve completely fused the *Profound Mysteries of Strength* and the *Throbbing Pulse of the World*.” Linley was exceedingly delighted.

After this day, Linley had mastered a total of five of the six profound mysteries of the *Laws of the Earth*, with only one remaining – *Vitality*.

“However, fusion really is hard. The *Profound Mysteries of Strength* have only been fused with the ‘*Throbbing Pulse of the World*’. I haven’t fused it at all with the ‘*Gravitational Space*’ or the ‘*Essence of the Earth*’, Linley said with a sigh.

He had originally hoped to be able to fuse it with the other two as well, so that he could strive to fuse four profound mysteries.

But from the looks of it, the path of fusion was indeed an extremely long one.

“You are already doing quite well.” Delia laughed encouragingly. “Didn’t you say that after you fuse the *Profound Mysteries of Strength* and the *Throbbing Pulse of the World*, that you will have a powerful material attack?”

“Of course.” Linley laughed as he thought of this.

The *Profound Mysteries of Strength* and the *Throbbing Pulse of the World* were both suited for material attacks.

“However, although I’ve fused these two profound mysteries, I still need to carefully analyze them and develop an attack technique suited to these profound mysteries.” Linley said. “Still, it won’t take too long. At most half a year or a year, but perhaps as little as two weeks.”

Linley himself was rather eager.

Once he developed it, he could pair this attack with his 'Blackstone Prison'. Even if he were to encounter Bulo again, he wouldn't just launch a simple fist without injuring Bulo at all. Even if he was unable to kill Bulo, he'd still be able to heavily wound him.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 39, Firmament Splitter

The Skyrise Mountains. At the borders of the great gorge.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

One massive vibration after another shook the earth. Many of the residents within the gorge could clearly sense these vibrations. They all felt puzzled, and quite a few headed to the place where the vibrations were emanating from. When they did, they saw...

That Linley was sending one punch after another into the ground.

Although his fist didn't actually impact the ground, the pulsating power of his blows still spread into the ground, causing it to tremble.

“It's Elder Linley!”

Those clansmen who had been somewhat annoyed, upon seeing that it was Linley training, didn't dare to say anything.

“Still not right.” Linley shook his head, then unleashed yet another heavy punch.

Although the punches seemed to be coming out at an extremely slow speed, they gave off the sensation of carrying the force of a mountain. When Linley's fist stopped at the end of each punch, vibrations passed through space.

But Linley just frowned, once more changing his style of attack.

When testing techniques, Linley wasn't in Dragonform. After all, once he was in Dragonform, the power of each fist would be simply too terrifying. Linley was completely absorbed in his training, constantly testing. In his mind, one type of attack after another arose, and then was quickly discarded.

Constant improvement...

“Patriarch, Elder Linley is currently in his gorge, punching the ground repeatedly, as though he is testing out some sort of technique. Elder Linley has already been training like this for a month.” A black-robed figure said respectfully.

Patriarch Gislason couldn't help but laugh. “Oh? Punching the ground? It seems he must be testing out a material attack. He's been wasting his advantage of having such a powerful body. He should've started training a more powerful material attack long ago.”

Relying on one's advantages was the intelligent choice.

Since Linley's body was powerful, he naturally had to focus on it.

“I want to see what he's developed.” Gislason immediately walked out of his residence.

In the past five centuries, Gislason had been worrying about the future of the Four Divine Beasts clan. He was also in a very bad mood. For him to go out and take a look was also a way by which he could relax.

Gislason flew at a very fast speed, soon arriving in the air above the gorge.

“Rumble...”

Gislason could clearly sense the ripples in air.

“It seems he’s doing quite well.” Gislason flew over at high speed, arriving at a place in the sky directly above Linley’s training location. Linley was currently completely absorbed in launching one attack after another, gaining insights and improving with each blow, and so he didn’t notice that anyone had arrived.

Linley’s right fist once more struck out...

His fist seemed like a giant millstone that was grinding slowly, and yet actually moved as fast as lightning. This punch actually created ripples in space that could be seen with the naked eye.

“Oho.” Gislason’s eyes lit up.

“Not right. Still not right...” Linley was shaking his head.

Each time he discarded a technique, he did so because he had gained a better understanding of it, and so he had made new breakthroughs. As he discovered flaws...he would once more seek an attack with greater power.

One technique discarded after another. One breakthrough after another...

A look of surprise slowly appeared on Gislason’s face.

“Strange. Why has the ground stopped trembling?” Everyone had gotten used to the ground trembling. When the ground stopped trembling, the clansmen who lived in the gorge were actually surprised, and quite a few hurried towards Linley’s training area.

“Can it be that Elder Linley has stopped training?”

The clansmen all hurried over, but as they did, they saw that Linley was still repeatedly punching towards the ground.

“All of you, leave.” A voice rumbled and echoed throughout the minds of the spectators. “Don’t disturb Elder Linley.”

These clansmen were all shocked. Only now did they discover that there was a person standing there in the air above. This person was their Patriarch, Gislason. But these ordinary clansmen had never before met their Patriarch.

“That person...seems to be an expert of some sort.”

The clansmen didn’t dare to disturb Linley, and so they all left.

Gislason turned to look at Linley, a hint of a smile being revealed on his face.

Linley struck out with his fist yet again, and at the edges of his punch, many spatial ripples appeared. The strange thing was, these spatial ripples all folded upon each other, rather than emanating outwards.

It was as though all of those spatial ripples were connected and building onto each other.

“Break!”

Linley had been training for more than three months. After three months of silence, Linley suddenly let out a growl, striking out with a massive punch. At the edges of this punch, a large number of spatial ripples appeared, and then they vanished.

“I finally succeeded!” A look of surprise and joy appeared on Linley’s face. With a ‘crackle’ sound, draconic scales immediately tore apart his clothes as they appeared from his body. Those savage spikes jutted out as well...

Dragonform!

“Let’s see how my most powerful material attack does.” Linley wanted to give it a test and see how he could do with a full force attack.

“Eh?” Linley suddenly turned and stared behind him, only to see Gislason watching him while grinning. Linley was shocked, and he hurriedly said, “Clan leader!”

“Haha, go ahead and test your attack.” Gislason laughed. “Given the strength of your body in Dragonform...I am quite eager to see what the power will be like, myself.”

“Yes, Patriarch.” Linley couldn’t help but feel itchy in his heart as well, and he immediately prepared for a test blow.

Linley’s draconic scale covered right fist suddenly swung out, and in the instant that it did, with a sudden rumble, the sound of space itself exploding could be heard. Wherever his right fist swung past, space trembled violently.

The power of this punch was akin to a flood dragon leaving its lair!

As the punch struck out, a large number of spatial ripples appeared at the edges of his draconic scale covered fist, causing the space around his fist to form a rippling half-sphere that was like a bubble of ripples...

And then, the explosion!

“BANG!”

A sound which caused the soul to tremble. The space surrounding the fist all blew apart, revealing a large black hole in space. Through this hole in space, one could clearly sense the vibrations from the region of chaotic space.

In an instant, the hole in space disappeared.

“Haha, good, good!!!” Gislason’s loud laughter rang out.

Linley was filled with joy as well. Although he had developed this attack in human form, that was just hypothetical. There was no way he could be sure what the power of the attack would be like when he was in Dragonform. But now it appeared...the power exceeded his expectations.

“Linley, what’s the name of this technique of yours?” Gislason laughed loudly.

Linley paused for a moment, then said, “This attack was formed from the fusing of the Profound Mysteries of Strength and the Throbbing Pulse of the World. Its name is ‘Firmament Splitter!’” This blow was capable of shattering space with a single punch. One could imagine how great its power was.

“Come, have a spar with me.” Gislason laughed loudly.

“Patriarch?” Linley couldn’t help but feel astonished.

“Hurry up!” Gislason couldn’t help but frown. “What, do you think you can actually beat me?” As he spoke, Gislason’s body became covered with azure draconic scales as well. The color of the scales was identical to Linley’s, but he didn’t have any sharp spikes on his body.

Linley began to laugh. “Patriarch, so you have this desire, then I will accompany you in a spar.” Linley was very confident right now as well.

“Linley, even just by comparing bodies, I’m more powerful than you. You have to use all your force.” Gislason laughed.

Linley laughed, and then immediately set up his ‘Blackstone Space’. Instantly, a blurry earthen yellow light sprang up, trapping Gislason within. Even the body of Patriarch Gislason couldn’t help but tremble, and he couldn’t help but let out a low curse, “This punk is really...”

But before he finished his words, Linley came flying at him.

“Patriarch!” Linley laughed loudly, his right fist flashing forward like thunder.

“Hmph!” A low snort. Gislason, his long azure hair fluttering, also sent his own right fist forward.

“BOOM!”

Two draconic scale covered ‘metal fists’, carrying countless tons of force, collided. Space itself was immediately torn open like a thin piece of paper. Gislason’s right fist couldn’t help but shake, and Gislason hurriedly move backwards, a hint of blood having actually appeared on his fist.

“Not bad, kid!” Gislason’s eyes were shining. “It seems as though it’s not enough for me to just use raw force against you.”

Linley, looking at the Patriarch who seemed to have gone berserk, was shocked inwardly. “The Patriarch’s body truly is tough. I used my most powerful blow, but the Patriarch only used raw strength.” But of course, the result of the Patriarch just using raw strength was that the draconic scales atop his fist had shattered.

From this exchange of fists, Linley was made clearly aware that Patriarch Gislason’s reputation of having the most powerful body in the Azure Dragon clan was indeed a solid one.

It only made sense. When he had his arm captured by Gislason that time, he hadn’t been able to resist at all.

“What technique is this?” Linley was somewhat astonished as he saw that a layer of frost had actually appeared on Gislason’s entire body, completely covering the Patriarch, including even his fist.

The ice-clad Gislason, under the glow of the sun, gleamed with beautiful light.

“Kid, I’ll just use half my strength.” Gislason laughed as he flew directly towards Linley. He was trapped in the ‘Blackstone Space’, but thanks to Gislason’s powerful body, his speed was still astonishing.

Linley didn’t retreat either, excitedly charging forward to meet him.

When drawing nearer to Gislason, Linley felt a freezing aura invade his body, so cold that Linley was astonished.

“Bang!”

Neither of the two dodged. Their fists slammed against each other, and where their fists passed, space itself directly collapsed. Linley couldn’t help but fly backwards after the collision.

“Haha...” The Patriarch immediately chased after him.

“Swoosh!” Linley immediately retreated.

“Kid, don’t run.” The Patriarch shouted.

Within the ‘Blackstone Space’, although the Patriarch was still very fast, he was still slightly slower than the Dragonformed Linley. Linley, relying on his speed, was dodging by relying on his speed, occasionally unleashing a powerful punch or kick.

“Whap!”

“Bang!”

“Boom!”

One enormous, world-shaking vibration after another. These vibrations attracted quite a few spectators from the gorge, and this battle between Linley and the Patriarch caused them to stare, slack-jawed. Every single exchange of blows caused space to collapse.

If these blows had landed on them, how many of them could withstand it?

Linley and Gislason finally came to a halt.

“Haha, Linley, your material attack is now at Blue’s level, at least.” Gislason was very satisfied.

But Linley discovered that just now, when he was exchanging blows with the Patriarch, even though the Patriarch was using only half of his might, he was still able to fight the Patriarch to a standstill. “Patriarch, your body is far more powerful than mine. How is it that your attack...?”

Linley didn’t understand. The Patriarch, in terms of profound mysteries, shouldn’t be weaker than him.

“This is a difference in the Laws.” Gislason said resignedly. “I primarily train in the ‘Elemental Laws of Water’. The defense of the Elemental Laws of Water isn’t bad, but it’s ability to unleash power isn’t that great.”

Linley nodded as well.

Of the Elemental Laws of Water, only the ‘Profound Mysteries of Ice’ allowed one to use one’s physical strength.

“In terms of physical strength, I’m no weaker than the Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan. But if we were competing in power attacks, he vastly outstrips me. This is because he trains in the Laws of the Earth.” Gislason said.

Linley laughed.

The Laws of the Earth even had the specialized ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’. Thus, it was only natural that those who trained in the Laws of the Earth were able to easily bring out the power of their bodies.

Every single Law had its own areas of specialization.

The four Edicts, as well, had their own differences.

The Elemental Laws of Water had superb defenses, with exceedingly strong defense against both soul attacks as well as material attacks. The Elemental Laws of Fire, by contrast, was different; it was weak in defense, but specialized in offense.

The Edicts of Fate, meanwhile, specialized in the soul, while having some deficiencies on the material side.

It was hard to be truly perfect.

“The power of your fists is already very great. It even poses a bit of a threat to me.” Gislason praised. “In the past, your fleeing abilities were excellent. But now, you will pose a great threat to your foes.”

Linley knew very well that when he clashed fists with the Patriarch, in truth, Linley’s own ‘Firmament Splitter’ had ablated much of the force of each of the Patriarch’s punches. Only an extremely small amount of power remained from the Patriarch’s punches.

Otherwise, each blow from the Patriarch would have been able to easily smash Linley’s fist.

Similarly...

In receiving each blow of Linley’s, the Patriarch had to rely on his profound mysteries to ablate the force. Otherwise...it would have been like their first exchange, with the results being shattered draconic scales and a hint of blood.

“Even someone like you, Patriarch, with such terrifyingly strong defense, was injured. How can ordinary Seven Star Fiends resist it?” Linley laughed.

In the past, Linley, thanks to his Blackstone Space, was very proficient in fleeing. His attacks, however, were far weaker than those which Seven Star Fiends normally possessed. However, the situation now was different. Even if that Elder Bulu once again encountered Linley, it would be very hard for him to win.

Deep within the Skyrite Mountains.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were at the edges of a cliff. Above the edge of the cliff, there was a large metallic lifeform in the shape of a black phoenix.

“Delia, I haven’t accompanied you on a single trip since arriving in the clan. This time, I definitely will accompany you.” Linley held Delia’s hand. They had agreed that once he fused the profound mysteries, the two would go on a trip together.”

Delia couldn’t help but reveal a smile of true happiness. “Right. This is our first trip...we’ve been here at the clan for almost six centuries now, but I barely noticed anything. I wonder how Sasha and Taylor are doing.”

“Taylor?” Linley couldn’t help but think of his children.

However, Linley still felt that the decision he had made that year was wise. The Infernal Realm truly was too dangerous. Wharton and Taylor, back at the Yulan continent, would at least be able to enjoy peaceful lives.

“Elder Linley.” A soft voice rang out.

Linley turned to look. The person who had come was Elder Tewila [Te'wei'la] of the Azure Dragon clan. Elder Tewila was a very good-tempered person who had never before entered Bloodbath Gorge. Not only was he not strong enough, he also preferred hiding like a turtle.

Linley actually felt very positively towards Tewila. Tewila, at least, wasn't as sinister and vicious as Emanuel and Forhan.

"Elder Tewila, you are the escort this time?" Linley laughed.

"Right." Tewila laughed so hard, his eyes creased into slits.

"Then I'll be troubling you to protect us this time, Elder Tewila. I'm going to Meer City on this trip as well." Linley laughed.

A look of delight and joy immediately appeared on Tewila's face. "Elder Linley, you are going as well? Haha, this is wonderful. With the two of us present, even if anything dangerous appears on this journey, we won't have anything to fear."

Linley laughed, then nodded.

"Oh, Elder Tewila, Elder Linley, you are here as well." A familiar voice rang out. Linley turned to look. The person who had just arrived was Forhan. Forhan's golden eyebrows raised up, and then he laughed. "This time, Elder Tewila is the escort, right?"

Tewila nodded. "Right. Elder Linley is going to Meer City this time as well."

"Oh." Forhan nodded. "Then, Elder Tewila, Elder Linley, have a safe journey. However, I imagine that with both of you present, there's no way anything untoward will happen."

"Elder Tewila, let's go." Linley couldn't be bothered to pay attention to Forhan.

For some reason, Linley always felt as though there was something in Forhan's gaze that made him feel uncomfortable.

Elder Tewila nodded in acknowledgment towards Forhan, and then flew alongside with Linley into the metallic lifeform, entering it. Quite a few people were hurriedly flying into the metallic lifeform.

As for Forhan, he just stood there at the cliff, looking upwards at the metallic lifeform, watching until it flew away.

"Hmph. This Linley remains so brash?" Forhan's face sank, his heart filled with rage.

He had always viewed Linley with some disfavor. As he saw it, in their clan, only the second and third generation members of the clan were the noble figures of it. Even if Forhan's mother didn't want to use the ancestor's Azure Dragon ring, he, Forhan, should be the one using it.

What was Linley?

Forhan's son, Emanuel, had lost his most powerful divine clone, and would never be able to advance again. He wanted to act against Linley, but...the four clan leaders had ordered that Linley not be required to carry out any missions.

Forhan's heart had been smoldering with rage this entire time without any place to let loose. The more time passed, the angrier he became!

“Going to Meer City, eh?” Forhan’s gaze was growing cold. “Hmph. Then I’ll let the forces of the eight great clans deal with you. When you die, you’ll be able to kill a few of their people as well. It won’t be a waste at all. Sadly...others will have to accompany you to the grave as well.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 40, Betrayal

The Skyrite Mountains. In the ground beneath the palace where Forhan lived. A dark, lightless underground hall.

The hall was chilly and forbidding. Currently, the only person within it was Forhan. Forhan was seated upon the throne in the hall, slouched over it like a beast in ambush, his eyes flashing with dim light, thinking thoughts only he knew.

“Inform the forces of the eight great clans?” Although Forhan did want Linley dead and to have the eight great clans do it, it was nothing more than a thought. As he seriously considered it, however...he began to hesitate.

This was because the only way to let the forces of the eight great clans know was to inform them.

As for the act of informing them, there was no way someone else could carry out this task, nor could anyone else be allowed to know of it. This was because this act would be considered a ‘betrayal of the clan’, a grave crime! Forhan, as an Elder, was confident that he would be able to easily pass this information regarding Linley to the eight great clans. If it were to leak out that he had done so, however, he, Forhan, would never have a place again amongst the Four Divine Beasts clan!

“Betrayal of the clan...is punishable by execution of all bodies.” Forhan remembered this punishment very clearly.

“For the sake of taking revenge upon Linley...to take such a great risk...is it worth it?” Forhan wanted to do it, but he still hesitated.

Without question, Forhan was deeply proud of the fact that he was a descendant of the Four Divine Beasts clan. He wouldn’t betray the clan. But he also wanted to kill Linley and worry about the consequences later!

“The Azure Dragon ring belonged to our ancestor! This Linley, of a generation that is so many times removed from us...by what right does he hold it?” Forhan’s eyes were cold. Jealousy constricted his heart, causing him to dislike Linley all the more.

“If Linley is permitted to continue to grow, there will come the day when he will be riding on my head.” Forhan still clearly remembered the conversation he had with his mother, the Grand Elder.

That time, the four clan leaders had ordered that Linley was to no longer participate in Bloodbath Gorge missions. Forhan was puzzled, and so later on, he went by himself to speak with the Grand Elder to ask her about this in detail, to try and understand why the clan leaders had made this decision.

The Grand Elder didn’t want to discuss the Redbud Sovereign, and so this is what she had said to Forhan: “Forhan, are you aware that Linley is just a God? A God who has the power of a Seven Star Fiend...when he becomes a Highgod, how powerful do you think he will be? He is the future hope of our clan. He can’t be put in danger for now!” Forhan, upon hearing the Grand Elder’s explanation, was shocked.

He had always believed that Linley was hiding his ability, but unexpectedly, Linley actually really was just a God.

Within that dark, cold, underground hall.

Forhan suddenly stood up, his gaze cold and sinister. In a low voice, he said, “This Linley is already a Seven Star Fiend. If this continues, once he becomes a Highgod, he will definitely become a trump card of our clan. His status will be even higher than mine, and he’ll be riding on my head! Can it be that in the future, I’ll have to forever watch him act so arrogantly in front of me?”

When Forhan imagined how glorious and influential Linley would be in the future, the look on Forhan’s face became all the uglier!

“No!” Forhan bellowed in a growling voice. “Absolutely not. Be beneath him for the rest of my life? I’d rather die.”

“Linley must die. He must!”

Forhan’s body was trembling slightly. “Right. I’m just getting rid of Linley. I’m not destroying the clan. This can’t be considered betraying the clan. It can’t! Also, I’m not personally killing him, I’m just letting the eight great clans kill him. Linley can be considered to have died in service to the clan, battling the eight great clans!”

“That Azure Dragon ring...”

Forhan couldn’t help but frown. “If Linley dies, wouldn’t that mean that the Azure Dragon ring would end up in the hands of the eight great clans?” Forhan was rather worried. The Azure Dragon ring was, after all, a precious treasure of the clan.

“No. It’s fine. It’ll only be Linley’s most powerful clone that dies. The other clones will remain alive in the Skyrite Mountains. Even if the eight great clans acquire the Azure Dragon ring, they won’t be able to bind it.” Forhan convinced himself. “Afterwards, when I have the chance, I’ll seize it back. And what’s more, Linley’s death won’t have a major impact on the clan. Our Four Divine Beasts clan was in a position of weakness to begin with...at most, we’ll just stay in the Skyrite Mountains. Our clan won’t be destroyed.”

After frantic pondering, Forhan finally came to a decision.

“A clan with Linley in it is a place I cannot live in, no matter how powerful the clan is. A clan without Linley in it, no matter how weak, is a place I can live comfortably.” Forhan quirked his lips. He had already made up his mind.

“Whoosh!” Forhan’s cloak fluttered as he walked out from his underground hall. He had already decided on what he was going to do.

A shadow appeared out of nowhere in the mountain villages, solidifying into a Forhan’s figure. However, this was just a divine clone of Forhan’s. Forhan let out a low chuckle, then his appearance changed, from that of a golden-haired old man to a bald youth.

Forhan, in his disguise as a ‘bald youth’, flew directly outwards...

“Rumble...” The waters of the river roiled about, and the ‘bald youth’ Forhan stood there, hovering in mid-air, sweeping the area below with his icy gaze. In a low voice, he said, “Men of the eight great clans. Come out.”

On the pre-determined routes, the people who were hidden belonged to either the intelligence networks of the Four Divine Beasts clan or of the eight great clans. Forhan knew exactly who his own clan’s agents were and where they were. If someone was present who didn’t belong to the Four Divine Beasts clan, then naturally they belonged to the enemy!

“Who are you?” A low voice transmitted down from below the river.

“Remember this. An Elder Linley of the Azure Dragon clan has already mounted an azure, phoenix-shaped metallic lifeform, and is heading to Meer City. If you want to kill him, then seize this opportunity. There’s another Elder travelling with him!” Although the metallic lifeform was in the shape of a black phoenix when they left, Elder Forhan knew that each time, when it headed out, the metallic lifeform would change to a different color and appearance. And so, Elder Forhan had investigated in advance.

This time, the transformation would be to the appearance of an azure phoenix.

At the same time, Forhan waved his hand, and a crystal ball fell down from the skies.

“In this crystal ball, there is stored the appearances of Linley’s wife Delia, as well as his good friend, ‘Bebe’.”

When the crystal ball fell to the surface of the water, a ray of azure energy appeared, wrapping around the crystal ball and pulling it underwater. Forhan, seeing this, smiled coldly, then turned and flew away at high speed.

Long after Forhan left, a green-haired figure emerged from the surface of the river.

“Elder Linley of the Azure Dragon clan?” A look of disbelief was on the face of this intelligence agent. “I didn’t expect I’d be able to render such a meritorious deed today.” The eight great clans had issued the order to find and kill Linley long ago. Naturally, they had ordered their intelligence agents to be on the lookout for him as well.

However, all these years, there had been no one who was successful in locating him.

The news from the intelligence agent came very quickly. That very day, the eight great clans were made aware of this, and immediately, the leaders of the eight great clans were all excited. None of them had expected this news to come so suddenly.

After a discussion, this mission was assigned to the Edric clan and three other clans.

The eight great clans were, after all, separately located at two different sides of Indigo Prefecture. The four clans on the west were the Edric clan who had come from the Higher Plane of Life, the Venna clan from the Divine Plane of Wind, the Dean clan from the Divine Plane of Earth, and the Reinales clan, native to the Infernal Realm.

The western borders of Indigo Prefecture. The Edric clan and the other three clans were gathered together. Below the main palace, there were eight figures dressed in gray robes.

“Although this Linley is only a God, he has the power of a Seven Star Fiend. In a few short missions, he has caused our eight great clans to lose multiple Seven Star Fiends.” A graceful, gentle voice came from a handsome, rather elfin-looking man who stood within the hall.

His long green hair fell to his waist, and his eyes seemed to glow like stars. This was Patriarch Edric, in the flesh. He had led his clan here from the Higher Plane of Life. It was he who had founded this clan.

“He isn’t a major threat to us yet, but if a few more years pass and he becomes a Highgod, then it will be terrible.”

“Thus, the eight of you must execute this Linley, no matter what the cost.” The voice was as gentle as ever.

“Yes, Patriarch.” Outside the main hall, two handsome gray-robed men bowed, while the other six gray-robed men hurriedly followed.

Within the hall, another Patriarch said calmly, “Here are three drops of Sovereign’s Might. Of the eight of you, Elder Zabu [Zha’bu], the strongest, will naturally carry one. As for the other two...Elders Tempah [Tan’pu] and Nice [Ni’si] will carry them.”

“Yes!”

The three immediately bowed respectfully. Of the three men, one was of the elfin-looking race.

“Remember. You must be successful in this endeavor. Even if you have to spend all three drops of Sovereign’s Might. Even if all eight of you have to die. You must kill Linley!” Another voice, a forceful, hard one, rang out.

“Yes!”

The eight Elders below couldn’t help but feel their hearts tighten.

Although they knew that this target of theirs, ‘Linley’, was just a Seven Star Fiend who was accompanied by a single other Seven Star Fiend, and that given the power the eight of them possessed, killing Linley shouldn’t be a problem...hearing the words from the Patriarchs, they couldn’t help but feel the pressure.

“Go, then! Move quickly, so that you might arrive at Meer earlier.” The gentle voice said.

The eight gray-robed Elders bowed fractionally, then immediately left.

Within the hall, the four Patriarchs began to chat amongst themselves. “This is an excellent opportunity. Failure is not an option. Only after we kill that Linley will we be able to relax slightly. I refuse to believe that the Four Divine Beasts clan will be able to produce yet another genius who has the potential to become a Highgod Paragon.”

“Don’t worry. These eight Elders are the elites which we have selected from our four clans. Linley will unquestionably die!”

“Eight mighty Elders, equipped with three drops of Sovereign’s Might. Even if I had to face them, I wouldn’t dare to resist head on.”

.....

The metallic lifeform in the shape of an azure phoenix was currently soaring through the horizons. Within this metallic lifeform, Linley and Delia were currently holding hands, seated in front of a window, staring at the outside through the translucent metal.

“We’ve flown for so long. We should arrive at Meer City soon.” Linley laughed.

Delia looked at the window, carefully inspecting the outside area. “I came here last time. If I remember correctly...we should arrive at Meer City in half an hour.” And then, Delia glanced at Linley, saying with resignation, “Elder Tewila really is cautious. He insisted on you changing your appearance.”

Linley currently had a beard, and even his height had been reduced slightly.

Linley chuckled. “It’s not as bad for you, but for us Elders, our enemies generally know exactly what we look like...although the chances of encountering them are low, it’s always better to be careful.”

“What, do you feel uncomfortable, seeing me like this?” Linley laughed and asked.

Delia shook her head, then closed her eyes. “Even with my eyes closed, I can still sense your aura. How could I feel uncomfortable?”

Linley laughed.

On the way over, Linley and Delia enjoyed a quiet, calm life as a couple. Soon, Linley and Delia saw an ancient city appear in the distance, and an endless flow of people entering and exiting the gates of the city.

“Wow, we finally made it!” Bebe was the first to jump up, sprinting outside.

Linley and Delia stood up together, following their clansmen out of the metallic lifeform. They followed Elder Tewila towards the gates of Meer City. Because Linley was a Fiend, he didn’t have to pay the city entrance fee.

“It’s been so many years since I’ve seen Tarosse, Dylin, and the others.” Linley laughed as he strode into the city.

But what he didn’t notice was that not far away, there were people maintaining a nonstop watch on the city gates. The arrival of the metallic lifeform of the Azure Dragon clan, in particular, caused these people to grow excited.

“The Azure Dragon clan’s metallic lifeform has arrived. Have you found Linley?”

“We haven’t.”

“We haven’t seen anything either!”

“I haven’t seen Linley, but I saw that Delia and Bebe. They have a man next to them. He looks like a God. That should be Linley!”

“A God? Then that should be him!”

The intelligence agents of the eight great clans conversed amongst themselves through divine sense, having already located Linley’s group.

There was no way they could be certain of the route the Azure Dragon clan’s metallic lifeform would take. The intelligence agents of the eight great clans were unable to find out, and so they had to wait at the gates of Meer City, like waiting for a rabbit to fall into their trap. After all, sooner or later, Linley’s group would have to arrive at Meer City.

Now that they entered the city, there was naturally no way for them to do anything.

But when Linley’s group exited to return to the Four Divine Beasts clan, the eight great clans would be able to make their move.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 41, A Mysterious Visitor

On the wide streets, people were coming to and fro.

Within the city, battle of any kind was absolutely forbidden. It didn't matter if you were a member of a strange race, and it didn't matter if you were a Highgod or were a Demigod. Here, you could comfortably, peacefully enjoy life, without any fear or danger.

"I haven't gone to a city a single time ever since the return to the clan." Linley looked at the two sides of the street, at the various stores.

"Boss, the city is far more interesting than the mountains. There's many places for entertainment, and also many places for watching scryer recordings. Boss, last time, when watching scryer recordings in the city, I discovered..." Bebe's eyebrows were dancing animatedly as he spoke, and at this point, he switched to divine sense. "There was one scryer recording that was of the battle at Miluo Island between you and those many island warriors, as well as a scryer recording of the battle against the red-robed elder afterwards." Bebe said.

"Places for watching scryer recordings?" Linley was rather surprised.

The Bagshaw clan considered some precious scryer recordings to be treasures.

"How are the scryer recordings, in those places within the city where they are available for viewing? Are there many recordings of experts doing battle?" Linley asked.

"Not many. Although there's quite a few Highgod battles, the skill level is roughly on par with the 'Arena' at Miluo Island. On occasion, there will be a battle at high skill levels, but the price for watching those is quite high as well." Bebe was rather unhappy. "Boss, when they show the scryer recording of your battle at Miluo Island, they should give you a share of the money."

Linley began to laugh loudly.

The nearby Delia began to laugh as well. "Bebe's words are well-spoken. They are releasing those scryer recordings without your permission." Delia, Bebe, and Linley chatted about scryer recordings while walking. Moments later, from up ahead, Tewila and the others turned around and started walking towards Linley.

Elder Tewila sent through divine sense, "Elder Linley, we'll stay here in Meer City for roughly a month. A month from today, we will head out once more to the Skyrite Mountains. During this month, Elder Linley, you can roam around in the city as you please. Remember, one month. If you miss it...then Elder Linley, if you want to return, you'll have to wait for the next group. Or go back by yourself."

"Don't worry. I know." Linley nodded. "Elder Tewila, please don't mind us, go do what you want to do."

After walking for a while further, Linley's group separated from Tewila and the others, and then Linley, Delia, and Bebe headed directly for Tarosse and Dylin's residence. When Tarosse, Dylin, and the others had arrived in Meer City, Bebe and Delia had been present as well. Naturally, they knew exactly where Tarosse and the others were living.

“Boss, Tarosse and the others purchased a large estate. They spent over a billion inkstones.” Bebe said hurriedly. “As for Dylin, Cesar, O’Brien, and the others, they are living there as well.”

Hearing this, Linley nodded. Tarosse’s group didn’t lack for money. It was right that they should buy a large estate in the city. As he thought about purchasing property, Linley couldn’t help but begin to laugh. “Bebe, Delia, do you still remember that year when we first went to Royalwing City? That time, when we saw those houses, the cheapest one was around sixty or seventy million, right? Back then, we were shocked when we saw those prices.”

Delia and Bebe, hearing this, began to laugh as well.

The cheapest houses in Royalwing City were around eight million, but people would seize the opportunity to buy houses like those. Normally speaking, empty houses would be worth nearly a hundred million. Generally speaking, only some fairly powerful Highgods were able to buy these things.

“At that time, I thought that only the ‘true elites’ of the Infernal Realm would be able to buy houses in cities. But now, it seems...” Linley shook his head and laughed. Indeed, those capable of buying houses in cities could be considered elites, but these so-called ‘elites’ were only elite in comparison to the many ordinary Deities of the Infernal Realm.

The true experts of the Infernal Realm, such as Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends, primarily lived outside of the cities, taking over a piece of land for themselves. They would build their own castles and collect a large group of subordinates. Although it was safe inside the cities, life wasn’t filled with as many challenges and as much excitement.

“Linley, we are here at Tarosse’s residence.” Delia pointed towards the front, and Linley followed Delia’s pointing finger as he looked. He saw a large estate, hundreds of meters long. Within a city, where every inch of ground was utterly precious, purchasing such an enormous estate for the price of just over a billion inkstones was a fairly good bargain.

Within the residence. In the front courtyard, there was a round pool of water, by the side of which there were trees, shrubs, grass, and flowers. A cobbled, wide stone floor that was shaped in a curve led from the gate to a residential area.

“Elder Brother, why are you dawdling in the room? Hurry up.” Currently, a muscular youth was shouting from below the residence. This was Dylin’s third son, ‘Clervaux’. He had gone with his elder brother that year along with Dylin to the Infernal Realm. As for his second brother, he had been killed on the eleventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods by those Abyssal Blade Demons.

“Coming.” A figure jumped down from the floor above, moving like lightning.

But right at that moment...

“Bang!” “Bang!” A loud, world-shaking knocking sound, joined by a thundering shout, “HEY, OPEN UP! Cleo, Clervaux, hurry up and open the door!”

“It’s Bebe.” The two siblings glanced at each other, then ran over.

“Rumble...” A rumbling sound, followed by the gates suddenly swinging open. There were three figures standing behind it.

“Linley.” Cleo and Clervaux couldn’t help but feel shocked. This was Linley’s first time visiting them in five centuries. And then, Clervaux excitedly called out, “Father, Uncle Tarosse, Linley has arrived!”

“Linley came?” From the distant residence, multiple figures immediately flew over, with the first one being Cesar.

Linley, upon seeing his fellows from his homeland, laughed and greeted them, directly embracing Cesar in a tight hug. “Cesar, long time no see.” “It has indeed been a long time. Elder Linley has a high rank, great power, and countless responsibilities each day, and thus has forgotten us minor figures.” Cesar teased deliberately.

Linley, seeing Cesar be so irreverent, couldn’t help but feel happy.

Cesar had finally returned to the way he had been in the Yulan continent; irreverent and uninhibited. It seemed as though the effects of what had happened in Miluo Island were wearing off.

“Linley.” Tarosse, Dylin, and O’Brien came to welcome him as well.

“Eh?” Linley saw that Olivier wasn’t amongst them, but there was a golden-haired beauty. Linley stared in surprise at the beauty who was at the back of the group. “She is...?”

Tarosse laughed devilishly. “Linley, she’s one of us. Why don’t you have a guess as to whose wife she is?”

“Wife?” Linley was stunned.

“Hey, someone’s gotten married? That hadn’t happened last time when I was here!” Bebe stared as well.

Tarosse began to laugh loudly. “When marrying a wife, of course you have to be fast. Have a guess as to whose she is?” Linley, Delia, and Bebe all turned to stare towards Cesar, Dylin, O’Brien, and Clervaux.

“Could it be Clervaux?” Bebe was the first to guess. “Or O’Brien’s? Wait, that can’t be right, O’Brien has that affair going on with the High Priest.” The War God O’Brien couldn’t help but feel awkward.

Immediately, Tarosse, Cesar, and the others all began to laugh. Dylin said hurriedly, “Alright, enough of that. Linley, Delia, I’ll make the introductions. This is my wife, Kamina [Ka’mi’na].”

“Mr. Linley, they’ve often spoken about you to me.” Kamina said with a laugh.

“Greetings, Kamina.” Linley and Delia both greeted Kamina as well.

Linley’s arrival caused the normally tranquil lives of Tarosse, Dylin, and the others to be slightly disrupted. Tarosse and the others immediately prepared a sumptuous welcome banquet that very day. Linley thus began to chat at the banquet table with Tarosse and the others regarding the affairs of the clan.

After knowing what had changed within the clan during the past five centuries, especially the viciousness of the battles that had occurred, Tarosse, Dylin, and the others couldn’t help but sigh. Kamina was truly shocked; she was just an ordinary God, and in the past, although she had heard Dylin say a few things regarding Linley, it had always felt like hearing stories regarding legendary figures.

Right now, when she heard from Linley himself speaking of the deaths of so many Seven Star Fiends, there was a different feeling.

Those were Seven Star Fiends!

Generally speaking, only the master of a city was a Seven Star Fiend. But the ancient Four Divine Beasts clan and those eight great clans who had come from all the various planes, in their battles against each other, had lost one Seven Star Fiend after another.

“Did you just say that Olivier left?” Linley said, surprised.

“Right.” Tarosse nodded. “Perhaps he’s not accustomed to the peaceful life within cities. He went to accept Fiend missions. Generally speaking, he’ll perhaps make a trip back here every ten years or every few decades.”

Fiend missions?

Linley nodded slightly. At the same time, he suddenly remembered...it seemed as though he was only a One Star Fiend! Although he had taken on two missions, neither had been successful.

“Olivier, in the Yulan continent, had also desired to live an exciting life in the Infernal Realm. Thus, he was the first to come here. His temperament makes him unsuited for living forever in a city.” Linley sighed.

Suddenly...

“Bang!” Suddenly, the sound of knocking against the door rang out yet again.

“Hey, someone is knocking at this time of the day? Everyone’s here though. Nobody’s outside.” Tarosse was puzzled. “Can it be that Olivier is back?”

“It can’t be such a coincidence, can it?” Linley laughed. Could it be that as soon as they discussed Olivier, he would arrive?

“Clervaux, go get the door.” Tarosse said, and Clervaux immediately rose and ran outside.

“Hey, hurry up and open the door.” A deep voice came from beyond the door, the voice shocking Linley. This was actually the voice of Phusro, the person who had saved him. Linley was very surprised to hear him.

Why had Phusro come here?

“Who are you?” Clervaux’s voice rang out. Clervaux didn’t recognize Phusro at all. As for Tarosse, Dylin, and the others, they quickly left the courtyard, seeing the big, red-haired man standing far away outside the gate.

But they didn’t recognize Phusro.

“Haha, Phusro! Boss, it’s Phusro!” Bebe called out, and Linley walked over as well, laughing, “Clervaux, he’s my friend.” Linley discovered...that Phusro actually had two subordinates trailing him.

“Kid, the first time we meet we are strangers, but the second time, we’ll be acquaintances. In the future, you’ll know who I am.” Phusro slapped Clervaux on the shoulders, causing Clervaux’s body to sway. Laughing loudly, Phusro walked in. “Linley, I knew you were here.”

Linley, hearing this, was shocked.

He had changed his appearance when he had arrived. How could Phusro have known he was here?

“Don’t be so surprised. The Governor of Meer City is my friend!” Phusro laughed. “When Delia accompanied these people to buy an estate, I arranged for people to pay attention.”

Linley now understood. So they had seen Delia and Bebe, and thus had been able to guess at his presence. But Linley was still astonished at Phusro’s connections; he actually was a friend of the Governor of Meer City!

“However, it wasn’t me who discovered you this time.” Phusro laughed. “It was another friend of mine who told me that you had arrived at Meer City.”

“Another friend?” Linley was surprised.

Phusro nodded. “Right. That friend of mine is extremely strong. My friend knows that I’m familiar with you, and so asked me to come. My friend’s wish is very simple...to meet with Bebe.”

Linley frowned.

Phusro was very powerful, and thus his friends were no doubt impressive as well. One friend was the Governor, while the other friend had actually discovered that Linley had arrived in Meer City. And this other friend wanted to see Bebe?

“Meet me?” Bebe was shocked.

“Who is this person?” Linley asked.

Phusro shook his head and laughed. “I can’t really say. If you want to ask, wait for Bebe to come back, then ask him. Right...do you agree for Bebe to make this trip?”

“To where? Is it within the city or outside?” Although Linley trusted Phusro, he was still worried about Bebe’s safety.

“Don’t worry. It is inside the city.” Phusro laughed.

Linley finally relaxed. Not even Seven Star Fiends would dare to do anything inside the city. After all, the rule that no battle was permitted within cities was a rule that was shared throughout the Infernal Realm, a rule set by Sovereigns. Who would dare violate it?

“Bebe, what do you think?” Linley turned to look at Bebe.

Bebe’s eyes were gleaming, and he laughed, “I very much want to see which mysterious person wishes to meet with me.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 42,

Nobody There

Phusro laughed and said, “Since Bebe agrees to meet that friend of mine, then how about this? You can follow my two servants. They’ll take you there.” Phusro looked towards Bebe, who was rather surprised. “Right now?”

“Of course. That friend of mine is currently waiting for you.” Phusro said.

“Boss, then I’ll head out now.” Bebe turned to look towards Linley.

Although Linley was puzzled as to who this mysterious figure was, since the meeting spot was within the city, Linley felt very much at ease. He thus nodded and laughed, “Go quickly and return quickly. Phusro is intentionally hiding that person’s identity. I’ll be waiting for you to tell me who it is.”

“Right.” Bebe nodded solemnly, and then glanced sideways at Phusro. “I’m not like some people, trying to act so mysterious.”

“You punk.” Phusro couldn’t help but begin to laugh.

Bebe strode outside while saying, “The two of you, hurry up and lead the way. I have no idea where this mysterious person who wants to meet me is living.” Phusro’s two servants immediately sped up the pace, leading Bebe away.

Linley watched as Bebe departed, the questions in his heart growing more and more numerous.

“Phusro.” Delia chuckled as she looked at Phusro. “Since Bebe’s already gone, there’s no need for you to keep the secret any longer. Who is this mysterious friend of yours?” Linley turned to look towards Phusro as well, awaiting Phusro’s answer.

But Phusro just laughed and didn’t respond.

“Do I know this person?” Linley asked.

Phusro paused a moment, then said, “You...shouldn’t know this person.”

Linley looked at Phusro, puzzled. Shouldn’t know this person? Knowing was knowing. Not knowing as not knowing. But Phusro’s words were so...hesitant.

“Linley, has it been ten thousand years since you were born?” Phusro asked.

“Ten thousand years?” Linley couldn’t help but laugh. “Up till now, I’ve only trained for a bit over a thousand years. I’m still quite a ways off from my second thousand years.”

“So short?” Phusro was rather surprised, and then he said, “Then I’m certain that regardless as to whether or not you’ve heard my friend’s name, you definitely haven’t met my friend in person. This is because...ten thousand years ago, this friend of mine left your Yulan continent and came to the Infernal Realm.”

Linley and Delia glanced at each other, astonished.

A person from the Yulan continent?

“Someone from the Yulan continent?” Tarosse, Dylin, Cesar, and the others, standing behind Linley, were surprised as well.

Phusro, seeing the looks of astonishment and confusion on their faces, laughed delightedly. “Haha, you can keep guessing. I refuse to tell...when Bebe comes back, you’ll know. But I imagine that it’ll be very hard for you to guess.”

Linley couldn’t help but shake his head and laugh. Phusro really did like to toy with people.

“Linley, how long will you be here?” Phusro suddenly asked.

“A month.” Linley said.

“Oh, so long? Then I’ll stay here for two days. If you have any free time, you can talk to me about the affairs of your Four Divine Beasts clan. I’m very curious about your Four Divine Beasts clan.” Phusro chortled.

And just like that, that very day, Phusro moved in. Fortunately, the estate which Tarosse’s group had purchased was large and had enough rooms.

Night.

Linley and Delia were still lying on the bed. After a passionate session, the night was now quiet, and the two of them, husband and wife, began to discuss that mysterious person.

“I had thought Bebe would be able to return the same day. I didn’t expect him to take so long.” Linley stroked Delia’s hair, laughing as he spoke.

“Perhaps Bebe, after meeting that mysterious person, not only chatted but also had some other matters to take care of.” Delia said. “This mysterious person actually came from the Yulan continent ten thousand years ago. We’ve never met this person before. I truly wonder who it is.”

“At first, I thought it was Lord Beirut. Afterwards, when Phusro said that I had never met this person before, I no longer had any idea who it is.” Linley was still puzzled.

And then Linley laughed and lowered his head, looking towards Delia.

“What is it?” Delia had the feeling that something was strange in Linley’s gaze.

“The two of us have just a pair of children. Although the Four Divine Beasts clansmen have very few progeny, I refuse to believe that we won’t have a third child.” Linley laughed softly, and then lowered his head to kiss Delia.

“Mmmph...”

Delia’s face flushed slightly. She couldn’t help but give Linley a ‘glare’, and then she stretched out her jade-like arms, embracing Linley’s neck. The two flipped over and entangled each other...

Who would have imagined that even by the time Phusro had left, Bebe still hadn’t returned? Linley couldn’t help but be rather nervous. How could a meeting with someone end up taking three days? Linley asked Phusro, but Phusro just told him not to worry.

After waiting five days...

“These scryer recordings I saw today were excellent. The ways in which those experts from the Higher Plane of Life do battle are quite peculiar. The ways in which they fly and the poses they adopt when attacking all seem so beautiful and alluring.” Delia laughed as she praised.

Linley nodded. “Those in the Higher Plane of Life primarily train in the Edicts of Life. Those attacks are so beautiful to behold, yet their power is so astonishing.”

While in Meer City, Linley and Delia would go wandering about in some of the more interesting parts of the city. It had to be said...that in Meer City, where so many people passed through, there really were many more interesting things than in the Skyrite Mountains.

Linley and Delia, laughing and chatting with each other, returned to their residence.

Upon reaching the gate, Delia let out a sigh. “I wonder if Bebe is back or not. This is the fifth day.” Although Delia was often thinking about this, she still wasn’t too worried. Firstly, Bebe was within the city and nothing would go wrong. Secondly, Linley and Bebe had a spiritual connection, and thus they could sense each other’s locations.

Linley just grinned, not saying anything as he looked towards the gate of the residence.

His soul had sensed long ago that Bebe was within the estate. A jubilatory cry was heard. “Boss!” The gates swung open, and Bebe, wearing his straw hat, was standing right there in front of them, beaming towards Linley and Delia.

“Bebe’s back?” Delia was startled, and then she turned to glare at Linley. Linley had to have sensed Bebe’s return, but he hadn’t said a thing on the way back.

Linley began to laugh loudly.

“Bebe, you really are something. When you went to meet with that mysterious figure, you ended up spending so much time. This is the fifth day.” Linley laughed while walking with Delia into the estate.

Within the estate, Tarosse, Dylin, Cesar, O’Brien, Kamina, and the others were all present. Upon seeing Linley and Delia enter, Tarosse laughed loudly, “Linley, you finally returned. We were asking Bebe who he had gone to visit, but he refused to tell us. He insisted on waiting until you were back and telling us all together.”

Bebe wrinkled his nose and snorted.

Linley and Delia immediately laughed, walking over and sitting down. Linley looked towards Bebe. “Bebe, stop teasing everyone. Just spit it out. If you don’t tell them today, Tarosse, Dylin, and the others will get angry.”

Tarosse and Dylin began to laugh as well. This was just a small matter, and they were simply curious. How could they actually grow angry?

“Fine, I’ll tell.” Bebe raised his head. “This person originally came from our Yulan continent.”

“We know this. It’s precisely because this person is from the Yulan continent, that we are all curious.” Tarosse immediately replied.

Bebe stared at everyone, then said smugly, “This mysterious person is...the wife of my Grandpa Beirut. My Grandma Carolina!”

“Carolina?” Linley immediately remembered that back in the Yulan continent, that year Bebe had indeed told him that Beirut’s wife was ‘Carolina’.

While at the Yulan continent, Linley had met Harvey, Hart, and Harry, the three brothers, but he had never met Carolina. When chatting with Harry and the others, Linley had heard that Carolina had long ago left the Yulan continent.

“It’s her?” Tarosse let out a sound of surprise, and then began to laugh loudly. “I should’ve thought of her long ago. Lord Carolina is the wife of Lord Beirut. It’s only natural that she comes to meet Bebe.”

“Lord Carolina is the wife of Lord Beirut?” O’Brien was rather surprised.

When O’Brien and Cesar were born, Carolina had already left the Yulan continent. Naturally, they had never heard of this person. In fact, they didn’t even know that she was Beirut’s wife.

“My Grandma Carolina is very formidable.” Bebe said smugly.

“Bebe, why did Grandma Carolina seek you out this time? And it took so much time as well.” Linley was still puzzled.

“She was helping my Grandpa bring me something.” Bebe chortled. “The fifth soul slice fragment.”

Dylin, Tarosse, O’Brien, and the others had faces filled with puzzlement.

But Delia and Linley were rather surprised. Bebe had spoken to them regarding the ‘soul slice’ matter. Originally, it was because Bebe had absorbed those four soul slices, which contained memories of souls which held insights on profound mysteries, which was why he had been able to learn four types of profound mysteries in such a short period of time.

“In recent years, Grandpa finally helped me find the last one.” Bebe said smugly. “Boss, you need to work hard. I might become a Highgod before you.”

Linley chuckled. By now, he had already mastered a fifth profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth, with one remaining. He trained extremely quickly in water as well, and had already mastered four.

“Haha, who knows which one of us will be Highgod first?” Linley laughed.

“What are you two talking about. What’s a soul fragment?” Dylin, Cesar, and the others were all puzzled. If a soul was shattered, it would be destroyed. How could there be ‘soul fragments’? What were soul fragments used for?

They couldn’t understand at all.

Time flew by very quickly. Life in Meer City was very relaxed, and in the blink of an eye, a month passed. On the day of departure, the Azure Dragon clan’s forces had already gathered outside the city. Everyone had arrived very early.

“Milord, the forces of the Azure Dragon clan are over there.”

“Do you see Linley and his family?”

“No! Most likely, they’ll arrive soon. The Azure Dragon clan’s people are still gathering.”

“Hurry up and notify the eight Elders. Let them make their preparations.”

“Don’t worry, milord. The eight Elders already know of this. Once the Azure Dragon clan’s forces head out, the eight Elders will be ready to strike at a moment’s notice.”

“Good. The eight Elders care deeply about killing Linley. There can’t be any mistakes made.”

An intelligence agent of the eight great clans was currently monitoring the gathering of Azure Dragon clansmen. These intelligence agents had memorized the appearance of these Azure Dragon clansmen when they had passed through the city gates.

Those ordinary clansmen hadn’t changed their appearance. Thus, when gathering together, they were immediately recognized.

Elder Tewila, his appearance changed, was currently waiting impatiently. Every so often, he would look towards the city entrance. “What’s going on with Linley? He still hasn’t arrived.”

“Elder Tewila.” A Highgod subordinate of Tewila sent through divine sense, “The other clansmen are all ready. We’re only waiting for Elder Linley and his group of three. What should we do? Wait here?”

Tewila frowned.

“No. Since Elder Linley’s group hasn’t come, they’ll most likely go back with the next group, or perhaps by themselves. We don’t need to concern ourselves.” Tewila immediately ordered, “Prepare to move out.”

Tewila immediately produced his enormous metallic lifeform, in the shape of a black tiger, and the Azure Dragon clansmen immediately boarded.

“Milord, the Azure Dragon clan is about to head out. Only that Linley, his wife, and his friend haven’t appeared.”

“Still haven’t appeared? Wait a while longer. That metallic lifeform will probably wait for some time before heading out.”

However, the black tiger-shaped metallic lifeform took the clansmen and left, not hesitating at all, immediately embarking and disappearing into the horizon. This sight caused quite a few intelligence agents to be stupefied.

“Milord...now what? Linley’s group of three truly has not arrived. There are three fewer people in that metallic lifeform than had arrived in the city.”

“Three fewer? Then it seems as though Linley’s group of three has yet to leave. Hurry up and inform the eight Elders...eh. Let the eight Elders rest for now, and continue to wait patiently.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 43,

Wade

Linley and his group of three hadn't departed, causing the intelligence agents of the eight great clans to have wasted their efforts, and causing those eight Elders, who had been preparing for so long, to have become excited for nothing.

Meer City. The residence of Tarosse and the others.

"Tarosse, I'm afraid we'll have to disturb you for a while longer." Linley's face was covered in smiles. He couldn't help but glance at Delia. He had been planning to return to the clan, but the previous night, Delia had actually told him...

That she...was pregnant!

"We were in the Skyrite Mountains for so long without her becoming pregnant. Who would have expected that now, she would?" Once Linley knew this news, he was unbelievably happy. Since Delia had become pregnant, Linley was no longer in a hurry to return to the Skyrite Mountains. After all, in terms of living environment, Meer City was much habitable than the Skyrite Mountains.

The plan was to first let Delia rest here. After giving birth to their child, they could go back.

"Haha, you can stay here as long as you like." Tarosse was puzzled. "But Linley, just yesterday, didn't you say that today was the day for you to head out? Why did you suddenly change your decision?" Cesar, by Tarosse's side, looked towards Linley as well, puzzled.

"Delia's pregnant." Linley said happily. Delia, by his side, couldn't help but blush.

Tarossee and Cesar immediately stared, and then began to laugh loudly.

"Haha, this is wonderful news. We have to celebrate!" Tarosse said hurriedly.

The news that Delia was pregnant caused everyone in the residence to be overjoyed. When Phusro came over, he discovered to his surprise that Linley actually hadn't left yet. When he asked, he learned about Delia being pregnant. He, too, was happy for Linley, and so the entire residence was filled with joyous sounds.

With Delia pregnant, Linley spent every single day by her side, watching as her belly grew bigger by the day. He grew more and more excited, and every so often, he would press his ear against Delia's belly, listening to the sounds.

When he drew near to Delia, Linley could even sense the blood pulsing through the veins of the unborn child, which seemed to reverberate slightly with his own lineage.

"Milord, our people have discovered Linley's friend, 'Bebe', within Meer City. We've quietly tailed him and finally discovered Bebe's residence. Our brothers plotted and schemed...and finally discovered the estate where Linley and Delia are living in!"

Meer City was a large city with a circumference of a thousand kilometers.

But to Deities, especially to the intelligence agents of the eight great clans, who stayed in Meer City for a long time, it wasn't hard for them to find Bebe, given how often Bebe went out. Upon finding Bebe...given the abilities of the eight great clans, finding Linley and Delia wasn't too hard.

"Excellent! Now that we've found their residence, everything else will be simple. Now, always have someone watching that place. Remember, you can't let Linley's group discover us. Whenever Linley heads out, immediately report it to us."

"Yes, milord!" "But, milord, what if Linley's group just remains in Meer City without leaving? What should we do?"

"Then..."

Fighting within the cities was forbidden. Even the eight great clans wouldn't dare to violate this rule.

"We'll just watch for now. I refuse to believe Linley will remain forever in Meer City. As for if Linley will really stay there without coming out...the Elders will decide what to do."

The eight great clans' intelligence agents continuously watched that residence. However, despite their careful attention, Linley just spent his time happily accompanying his wife, seemingly not intending to leave at all.

.....

Linley was seated outside, holding a cup of wine. He was rather rattled, occasionally turning to look back into the room. This was because Delia was in the room, and Delia was already close to the point of birth.

"Whew..." Linley couldn't help but take a deep breath.

He hadn't been as nervous as this, even when he was fighting against Seven Star Fiends.

"I wonder if it's a boy or a girl. I wonder if the child has been born yet or not. I wonder if Delia is..." Countless thoughts flitted through Linley's mind in a jumbled fashion. The hand holding the wine cup was trembling slightly.

"Boss, it isn't as though you haven't had any experience. Still so nervous?" Bebe, by his side, was snickering.

Linley couldn't help but glance at him, then forced out a smile. "Bebe, when one day you are about to become a father, you'll know. Each time you wait...the tension isn't any less than when battling against ultimate experts."

While waiting outside, Linley felt as though his heart was tight against his chest.

Next to him was O'Brien, Dylin, Tarosse, and the others. Even Phusro had come over today, and was chatting with the others while teasing Linley. Linley didn't spend any time chatting with them.

His attention was focused on the room.

"Waaaaaaaaa!"

An ear-piercing infant's cry broke the silence of the entire estate. It was like a ray of sunlight flashing within Linley's mind, causing all the countless doubts and worries to vanish. At this moment, he had only a single thought...

The child had been born!

“Whoosh!” Linley charged towards the door, and at this moment, the door was opened. Dylin’s wife, ‘Kamina’, laughed as she walked out. “Linley, congratulations. Delia’s given birth to a son!”

Linley, not caring whether it was a boy or a girl, immediately entered the room.

Within the room, a faint sheen of perspiration could be seen on Delia’s forehead. She was seated on the bed, cradling an infant. Seeing Linley enter, she immediately stood up then walked over. “Linley, look. He’s very quiet. Just now, he was crying, but now he’s calmer.”

Linley took a careful look at the infant in Delia’s arms. That pouting face, that tiny body and head...he looked so similar to how Taylor and Sasha had been.

“Let me hold him.” Linley’s heart was beating rapidly.

No matter how powerful an expert was, upon becoming a father and holding his son for the first time, he would feel excited, nervous, and agitated.

Holding the infant in his arms, he could feel the slight weight of his son against him. Although infants were very light, especially to a powerful expert like Linley, to whom this sort of weight was nothing, Linley felt as though this light weight was pressing down against his heart.

“Son. My son!” Linley couldn’t help but shout in his heart, “This is my son!!!”

Holding his son, Linley had that sensation of his blood being passed down, of life continuing.

“Linley, what’s the child’s name? Have you come to a decision?” Delia said.

“We’ll call him Wade.” Linley looked dotingly at the child in his arms.

“Wade...Wade...say ‘Father’?” Linley said, gently stroking his son’s little nose. The skin was so soft. But perhaps Linley hurt him as he touched him, as Wade, who had just stopped crying moments ago, began to bawl loudly again.

Delia immediately stretched her arms out to take him back. “He’s just a newborn, and yet you want him to call you ‘Father’. The child’s crying already. Quick, let me hold him.”

“It’s fine. The son of Linley doesn’t need to be pampered that much.” Linley said. “Let me hold him for a while longer.”

Holding his son ‘Wade’ in his arms, Linley felt utter joy in his heart. The feeling of holding his son in his arms was even more exciting and happy for him than the feeling of holding a Sovereign artifact.

Seeing how reluctant Linley was to part from Wade, Delia couldn’t help but laugh.

Linley lowered his head to look at his son. He felt as though he could never get tired of looking at him.

“Waaaaaaa...” Wade cried for a while, then stopped crying. His big guileless, pure eyes, containing no artifice at all, stared at Linley. This was the first man he had seen after his birth!

He didn’t know yet that this was his father!

He was the son of Linley! It was guaranteed that his life would not be an ordinary one!

“Linley, why haven’t you come out yet?” Cesar’s voice rang out.

“Boss, hurry up and carry your son out. We uncles want to hold him too!” Bebe called loudly. At this moment, Linley and Delia, within the room, came to their senses. They couldn’t help but grin at each other, then walked out while holding the child.

As soon as they walked outside, Bebe, Clervaux, and the others all rushed forward.

“Lemme hold him!” Bebe said jubilantly.

Their son was born. Linley and Delia felt utter bliss as they played with their son. They were in no rush to return to the Skyrise Mountains at all. But although they weren’t in a rush, the intelligence agents of the eight great clans, especially those eight Elders, were frantic.

None of them had any idea how long Linley would stay here before returning.

However, they obviously couldn’t go and tell him to hurry up. They just had to watch as Linley spent every day enjoying his time with his son.

“Milord, our men are always in wait and always watching. But it’s been a year already. When will this come to an end?” The intelligence agents of the eight great clans were watching day and night, not daring to slack off at all.

“Linley is currently holding that infant right now. Are we supposed to just watch and wait until the infant grows up to become an adult?”

Just watching every day was indeed tiring, especially since they didn’t even know how long they would have to keep doing it.

“Don’t be impatient. I’ve already reported this to the Patriarchs, and the eight Patriarchs sent back a single word in response; ‘Wait’! No matter what, we are not to arouse Linley’s notice. He can’t always stay in Meer City. There will be a day when he comes out!”

“Yes, milord.”

The intelligence agents had no choice but to grit their teeth and keep watching.

On the streets of Meer City. Linley and Delia were walking shoulder to shoulder, with their son ‘Wade’ being taken care of by Kamina. The reason they had come out today was to buy some nutritious foodstuffs. Wade was still young. When he started to grow, he would need to eat many things.

“When we return later to the Skyrise Mountains, there won’t be so much food available for sale.” Linley laughed. “We should have bought enough this time.”

“Of course we bought enough. These things we bought cost us tens of millions of inkstones. It’s more than enough for Wade to eat for over ten years.” Delia laughed. “Compared to Sasha and Taylor, the food which Wade will eat while growing up will be much better.”

“Wade doesn’t know that he has an older brother and sister right now. When he grows up and knows more, we’ll tell him.” Knowing that he had his son by his side, he felt full of energy in everything he did, be it training or eating!

Just as Linley and Delia were chatting mentally on the way back, they suddenly saw someone...

“Eh?” Linley stared, astonished, at a distant figure. It was a member of the Azure Dragon clan. All of the clansmen had emblems of the clan, and they could all sense each other’s presence. This was why Linley sensed this person in front of him.

In Meer City, Linley had already run into quite a few members of the Azure Dragon clan. But this was the first time Linley had run into someone he knew.

“Elder Linley.” The other person had discovered Linley as well, and hurriedly reached out with divine sense.

“Elder Tewila.” Linley immediately responded with divine sense.

Linley and Tewila had both changed their appearances, but they looked exactly the same as they had when they last left. Naturally, the two could easily recognize each other.

Tewila smiled while walking over and saying through divine sense, “Elder Linley, you didn’t return with us last time. Did something happen?”

“I’m truly sorry. I really didn’t expect that in the month I had been at Meer City, my wife would become pregnant.” Linley laughed while sending back. “At that time, I came to the decision that I would return after my child was born.”

“Ah! Congratulations, congratulations.” Elder Tewila hurriedly sent back.

Linley was all smiles as well.

“Right. Elder Tewila, are you escorting the metallic lifeform this time?” Linley asked. “The clan sends a batch every half year. It’s only been a year and a half, but it’s your turn again?”

“Nothing for it. In the past four, five hundred years, we’ve lost too many Elders. The clan has too few Elders now, and most have entered Bloodbath Gorge.” Tewila said helplessly. “Thus, there’re only a few Elders on rotation for escorting the metallic lifeform.”

Linley now understood.

Linley knew that the clan had suffered tremendous losses over the past five centuries. As for exactly how many Elders had been lost, however, Linley had never asked in detail. However...in the first two hundred years, they had lost five Elders. Most likely, over five hundred years, more than ten Elders had been lost.

“Tewila, when will you head back? We were just preparing to head back ourselves. Let’s go together.” Linley laughed.

“Oh. We’re heading out in two days.” Tewila was very happy as well. “Elder Linley, if you head out with us, then it will be much safer with us having joined forces.”

“Very well. We’ll meet in two days at dawn.” Linley said.

“Definitely. However, when the time comes, make sure you show up this time.” Tewila laughed.

“That won’t happen again.” Linley laughed.

Two days later. Dawn. The gates of the estate. Delia was holding little Wade, bidding farewell to Tarosse and the others, Linley and Bebe by her side.

“Tarosse, no need to send us off.” Linley laughed.

“In the future, you must often come visit. I love this little Wade.” Tarosse laughed.

Bebe laughed as well. “By the time you come again, Wade will be all grown up.”

After bidding farewell to their friends, Linley, Delia, and Bebe took little Wade to head directly towards the gates of the city. This scene, in turn, was noticed by a figure located within a distant, tall building who was watching through a window. “Linley’s group...seems to be preparing to head out.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 44, Catching a Ride

The gates of Meer City. The intelligence station for the eight great clans' intelligence agents.

“Milord, Linley's group of three, along with an infant, have already headed out. They will reach the city gates soon.”

“Oh? They even brought the infant out? It seems they really are prepared to leave the city. However, there's no rush. Let's take it slowly. After you see Linley's group reach the city gates, only then should you make the report to the eight Elders.” The speaker was a seemingly honest-looking youth.

This honest-looking youth was standing in front of a window, a casual look on his face as he glanced downwards.

He could very clearly see the gates from his current position.

A long time later...

The pupils of the honest-looking youth contracted. Within his field of vision, amidst the massive, thronging crowds, Linley's group had appeared.

“Oh, Linley, Linley, Linley. You finally show yourself. I thought you'd end up spending millions of years in Meer City, but it seemed as though you decided to just spend a year or so.” The honest-looking youth narrowed his eyes, a very innocent-looking smile appearing on his face.

“Quick. Spread this news to the Elders.” The honest-looking youth immediately sent through divine sense.

“Yes!”

In a mountain forest roughly a thousand kilometers away from Meer City, there was a very ordinary stone house constructed there. This stone house was very wide, and it had eight prayer mats within the building. Eight gray-robed men were seated in the meditative position on those prayer mats, quietly awaiting.

It had been more than a year!

They had brought with them a murderous intent as they had prepared to kill Linley. However, they had ended up waiting here the entire time. Slowly, their killing aura had decreased.

“If Linley doesn't want to leave the city, who knows how long it will take? Ten years, a thousand years, ten thousand years?” A gray-robed man with long black hair and a beard said, rather upset.

Without a specific timeframe, it would be easy for anyone to grow impatient while waiting.

“Tempah!” A graceful voice rang out. “The members of your Reinales clan are still unable to be calm, it seems.”

The bearded gray-robed man let out a snort, saying nothing else.

“Someone is coming.” Suddenly, a sharp voice rang out. As soon as the words finished, a figure flew in at high speed. This person was one of the intelligence agents assigned to this place, who would be able to bring news to the eight Elders at any time.

“Eight Elders, Linley, Linley is leaving the city!” An excited voice rang out.

“Boom!” The eight gray-robed figures immediately rose to their feet. Even the most stolid of the eight, their leader, ‘Elder Zabu’, revealed a look of joy on his face. He immediately said, “Linley has finally shown himself. Everyone...remember, when attacking, immediately use your Sovereign’s Might. We must use full force and immediately kill Linley.”

Outside Meer City. The Azure Dragon clan’s clansmen were gathering together. Because of the clan’s seal, everyone could clearly sense everyone else.

“Elder Linley, you came fairly early today.” Tewila said through divine sense.

Linley laughed and nodded. “I was afraid that if I came late, Elder Tewila, you would be angry with me.” Tewila’s gaze swept towards Delia and the infant ‘Wade’ in her arms, then he sent, “Linley, this is your son, right? He’s so pretty.”

“When Wade was born, he looked like an old man.” Linley said. When someone praised his son, he naturally would be pleased.

“Right. When are we heading out?” Linley asked.

Tewila glanced around himself. “From the looks of it, we are almost all here. Let’s just wait a while longer. Right, Linley. Today, on our metallic lifeform, we have a very special guest.”

“Oh, a special guest?” Linley was rather surprised.

“Right. The Patriarch personally entrusted me with this task, ordering me to bring him to the Skyrise Mountains.” Tewila laughed. “Follow me. I’ll introduce you to him.”

Linley, rather curious as to who this special guest was, followed Tewila’s lead. Linley saw that this special passenger was a seemingly skinny-looking youth with short golden hair, and a guileless smile on his face.

However...when Linley looked at him, he had a familiar feeling.

“Haha, Linley.” A clear and straightforward voice echoed in Linley’s mind. Linley was shocked into awareness. This was Phusro! This voice was Phusro’s voice!

“You?!” Linley stared in amazement at the skinny youth in front of him, and the skinny youth winked, sending mentally, “There’s nothing for it. Your Patriarch said that due to my actions last time, the eight great clans probably know my appearance by now. I have to change my appearance, even when I’m riding on your metallic lifeform. Geeze...what’s there to fear? Even if a few Elders come, I’ll dispose of them by myself.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

Phusro was a Sovereign’s Emissary. Linley had personally witnessed his might before, and even Bulu, after using a drop of Sovereign’s Might, was far from being a match for Phusro. It would be very simple for him to kill several Elders.

“Haha, the Patriarch is doing this for the sake of the clan.” Linley laughed. “Right. How did you get involved with the Patriarch?” Last time, when Phusro had intervened and saved him, he hadn’t known the Patriarch.

However, five centuries had passed. Anything could have happened in the mean time.

“You don’t need to worry about that.” Phusro sent through divine sense. “My meeting with your Patriarch will be beneficial to you, not detrimental. That’s all that you need to know.”

Linley laughed and nodded. “Everything else aside, you accompanying us back to the Skyrite Mountains alone is a great benefit.” With Phusro present, along with himself and Tewila, they were a force of sizable power.

Phusro by himself was equal to multiple Seven Star Fiends.

“In addition, I’ve never even see Phusro unleash all of his power.” Linley thought to himself.

“Linley, who is this?” Delia and Bebe looked at the skinny youth, puzzled. Linley chuckled. “When we board the metallic lifeform, I’ll introduce you to him.”

Phusro just winked deliberately.

“Uh...waaaaa...” Wade, in Delia’s arms, reached out his pudgy fingers towards Phusro. Phusro had held Wade quite a few times before as well. Although Phusro’s appearance had changed greatly, Wade, who had been born less than a year ago, seemed to possess some special sense.

“Wade, be good.” Phusro beamed towards Wade.

Delia and Bebe were shocked. How did the skinny little youth in front of them know Wade’s name?

“Everyone’s here. Let’s head out.” Tewila walked over, and as he did, an enormous silver metallic lifeform in the shape of a silver wolf appeared. A tunnel appeared in its flank, and the clansmen of the Azure dragon clan all entered the metallic lifeform.

Linley, Phusro, Tewila Bebe, and Delia boarded as well.

“Swoosh!”

The metallic lifeform slashed through the air, turning into a blur and disappearing into the horizon.

“The metallic lifeform is flying towards position two. It is flying towards position two!” The intelligence agents of the eight great clans quickly relayed this information.

In mid-air, there were nine figures flying at high speed. Eight of them were dressed in long gray robes, while the last one was dressed in a long green robe. The green-robed man said hurriedly, “Eight Elders, Linley’s metallic lifeform was originally headed towards position two, but now they’ve changed directions slightly. They should be passing through position four. We’re still a few hundred kilometers away from that location. We’ll be there soon!”

The eight great clans’ intelligence agents had expended an enormous amount of effort on this.

With the gate as the center, they had fanned out and set up many gathering points within thousands of kilometers. No matter what direction the Azure Dragon clan’s metallic lifeform headed towards, they would be easily detected by those intelligence agents.

As for that green-robed man, one of his divine clones was at the headquarters, and so he knew the location and route of the metallic lifeform at all times.

“Excellent.” Elder Zabu laughed calmly and spoke mentally. “Everyone, we’re only a few hundred kilometers away. We’ll reach the metallic lifeform soon. When we do, immediately cover it with your divine senses and locate Linley. At that time...Annecy [An’ni’xi], you’ll be responsible for covering the Elder who is protecting the metallic lifeform. Everyone else, myself included, will all attack simultaneously, joining forces to kill Linley. We can’t give him any chance at all.

“Yes.” The seven Elders assented.

Of these eight Elders, three were in possession of Sovereign’s Might. Annecy was one of the ‘ordinary’ Elders without it.

On this joint mission to kill Linley, three Elders would use their Sovereign’s Might, with four other Elders joining them. With such a tremendously powerful squad...even if Patriarch Gislason came, it would be hard for him to endure such an attack, much less Linley!

“Actually, Elder Zabu, if you use your Sovereign’s Might, you’ll be more than strong enough to kill Linley by yourself. Even if we don’t use Sovereign’s Might, the joint attacks of seven Elders against Linley will result in a surefire victory.” The bearded Elder sent mentally.

“We can’t be the slightest bit incautious!”

“Remember. Immediately use your Sovereign’s Might. Don’t entertain any notions of being frugal. Kill Linley. Nothing is permitted to go wrong.” Elder Zabu ordered solemnly yet again. “Nice, Tempah, the two of you must use your Sovereign’s Might right away when attack.”

It was like killing a chicken with a blade meant for slaughtering cows. It was an utter waste.

Using three drops of Sovereign’s Might to kill a single Linley? It was indeed extravagant.

The enormous wolf-shaped silvery metallic lifeform was speeding forward at a fast pace. The clansmen within the metallic lifeform were chatting amongst each other. Linley, as an Elder, naturally had his own room.

Linley and Delia were within the room, while Delia was holding little Wade.

“Wade, Wade.” Linley teased his son.

“Wuuu, wuuuuu...” Wade, not yet able to speak, could only stare with his big, clear eyes at Linley, mumbling something incomprehensible.

Delia watched this scene, watched as her husband teased her son. As she did, Delia’s face couldn’t help but reveal a smile. She felt surrounded by bliss, and celebrated once more her decision to steadfastly wait ten years for Linley, so long ago in the past.

Linley turned to look and smile towards Delia. “Delia, what are you laughing about?”

“I’m just looking at you and our son.” Delia’s smile was so brilliant.

But right at that moment...

Eight divine senses simultaneously spread out, covering the metallic lifeform and everyone within it. The faces of many clansmen couldn’t help but change, and Delia, as a Highgod, felt the divine senses as well.

Eight divine senses had suddenly swept out? This definitely couldn’t be a good.

“Linley, eight Highgod divine senses just swept through this metallic lifeform.” Delia immediately said through divine sense. There was no time to talk.

Shocked, Linley’s face changed. He immediately spread his divine sense towards the outside...

And in mid-air, eight gray-robed figures were charging at high speed towards the metallic lifeform. Three of them, in particular, were emanating a terrifying, heart-stopping aura from their entire bodies. Linley could instantly recognize the aura for what it was. Sovereign’s Might.

“Sovereign’s Might!” Linley’s face changed dramatically.

One of the eight gray-robed men was moving fairly slowly.

As for the other seven, especially the three whose bodies were completely covered by a layer of Sovereign’s Might, charged straight for the metallic lifeform, directly towards the room which Linley was staying in.

“Die!”

“Linley, quick, flee!!!”

The voices of Phusro and Tewila instantly rang out in Linley’s mind. They clearly noticed the enemies before Linley had.

But...there was no time!

“BANG!”

A terrifying energy wave struck the metallic lifeform, and in the face of that frightening energy wave, the surface of the metallic lifeform blew apart as though it were paper. The shards were sent flying wildly every which way by the explosion. Linley let a deep growl, and his draconic scales emerged as he entered his Dragonform.

“Slash!” Shards of metal flew about everywhere, and Delia immediately lowered her head, tightly embracing her son protectively.

“Delia, flee.” Linley pushed Delia away powerfully, then shouted through divine sense, “Tewila, protect Delia!” The enemies were clearly here for him. This battle was one in which Phusro and Linley would play the primary roles.

“Linley!” Delia, pushed aside, shot backwards like an arrow. Her body immediately became covered with a shield of divine power, protecting little Wade. But Delia still turned to look back...

A blurry, earthen yellow light had suddenly spread out. Gravitational Space!

An azure light had also burst forth. Water-type Sovereign’s Might!

In an instant, Linley had unleashed all of his power!

A fiery red form charged over while shouting through divine sense, “Delia, hurry up and flee, leave the battle to us!”

“Roaaaaar!” A ferocious draconic howl shook out!

“Bang!”

A terrifying, soul-shaking explosive vibration blasted out from the center of that earthen yellow light. Space itself cracked open in multiple areas, and wild blasts of energy emanated in every direction. Some of the weaker clansmen who were hit by it immediately exploded and died.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 45, A Frantic Battle

Within the blurry, earthen yellow field, Linley, his entire body covered by that azure light, had just suffered the combined attacks of seven Elders. The seven mighty Elders had all unleashed the attacks they were most proficient at, either material attacks that tore through the air or invisible spiritual attacks.

Because this all happened within such a short time frame, and because he chose to first push Delia out of the danger zone, Linley wasn't able to dodge at all.

“Rumble...”

Seven bursts of terrifyingly powerful attacks all struck Linley, three of which were attacks which contained Sovereign's Might. The air around Linley blew apart, and his draconic scales shattered as blood splashed everywhere. Linley's ravaged body fell down like a meteor, plunging from the skies, smashing hard against the ground.

“BANG!”

The earth trembled, and a crater that was two or three meters wide and so deep that the bottom couldn't be seen appeared.

A dazzling, fiery red light slashed through the skies. “Aaaaaah!” A desolate, miserable scream. At the same instant that Linley fell from the skies, Elder ‘Nice’, his entire body filled with Sovereign's Might, fell down from the skies as well. His head had already been completely disintegrated and could no longer be seen.

In but an instant!

Linley's status was unknown. On the side of the eight Elders, an Elder who had used Sovereign's Might, Elder Nice, had died.

“You...”

The eight Elders, who had been radiating such an indomitable, martial spirit, were stunned by Phusro's sudden attack. The seven remaining ones stared in astonishment at this red-haired man whose entire body radiated fire-type Sovereign's Might, who was wielding a long awl in his hands.

In a single blow, he had killed Elder Nice, who had used Sovereign's Might!

“Linley!” Phusro immediately sent his divine sense into the ground.

“Linley!” Delia's face turned ashen, and at the same time, she howled desperately through divine sense, “Elder Tewila, quick, quick, go help Linley, quick!”

“Alright, but you have to be careful and stay far away. Don't be hit by the shockwaves.” Tewila replied urgently through divine sense. Although he had experienced hundreds of battles, upon seeing the sudden, terrifying attacks just now, Tewila was tense as well.

Good heavens!

Phusro was himself a Sovereign's Emissary. It was only normal for him to have a drop of Sovereign's Might. But unexpectedly, the enemy had used three drops of Sovereign's Might as well!

"It seems that after hiding for so many years, it is time to let the eight great clans know the power that I, Tewila, possess!" Tewila said to himself. And then, not hesitating at all, he used his drop of Sovereign's Might as well.

A wild burst of water-type Sovereign's Might blasted forth.

This immediately caused the seven Elders in the distance to glance towards him, their faces changing dramatically.

"Elder Zabu, that person in the distance should be an Elder of the Azure Dragon clan. The person in front of him should be that Sovereign's Emissary named Phusro who saved Linley five centuries ago." Tempah's entire body was emanating the aura of Sovereign's Might. He hurriedly asked, "The enemy is more powerful than we expected. What should we do now?"

The seven surviving Elders had a bad feeling!

An ugly look was on Elder Zabu's face. He had heard of Phusro's power. If Phusro didn't have a Sovereign artifact, he wouldn't be afraid of Phusro, but Phusro had not only used his Sovereign artifact, but also Sovereign's Might...

He had to admit that he was one level weaker than Phusro.

Elder Zabu's eyes flashed with a decisive look, and he immediately gave the order. "The Patriarchs have given us our orders. In this battle...we must kill Linley, no matter what. Even if all eight of us die, we must kill Linley. Let me deal with this Phusro. I'll contain him for now...Annecy, you do what you have to do in order to contain that Elder of the Azure Dragon clan. The other five Elders...Tempah, I entrust Linley to you. Even if you die, you must kill him!"

"Yes!"

The other six Elders immediately became resolved.

Although this took time to describe, in truth, the communication through divine sense by these seven Elders happened in the blink of an eye. In that blink of an eye, there was only enough time for Tewila to begin to charge over...and as he did, Phusro laughed!

"Haha...you are so audacious. All of you, die." Phusro laughed wildly, and was the first to charge over.

"Remember, at all costs, kill Linley!" The elfin-looking 'Elder Zabu' shouted through divine sense, while he charged forward to meet Phusro. As for Elder Annecy, he went to go deal with Tewila.

"Swish." "Swish."

With Elder Zabu at the center, ten million strands of green branches erupted forth, sweeping towards Phusro. Those ten million green branches were filled with a green aura, encasing Phusro within.

This was Elder Zabu's ultimate technique...

The 'Dance of Life'!

The goal wasn't to kill the enemy, just to contain the enemy!

.....
“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang”! “Bang!”

The five Elders led by Elder Tempah charged directly into the ground. The tough, unyielding ground, in the face of these Seven Star Fiends, seemed to be made out of tofu, and giant tunnels in the earth were created by each of them.

“What is going on, what in the world is going on?” Many of the Azure Dragon clansmen were hovering in midair in the distance. This sudden attack had made them all numb.

“It must be the forces of the eight great clans.”

The Azure Dragon clansmen could only come to this conclusion. They all stared worriedly at the two battles going on in mid-air, while there was a massive battle going on below as well.

Delia, holding little Wade and with Bebe by her side, stood there in mid-air, staring worriedly towards the ground.

“Delia, don’t worry. The Boss is fine.” Bebe hurriedly said through divine sense. “I can sense that the Boss is still alive.” But although this was what Bebe said, a hint of worry could still be seen in his gaze.

This was because...

Shattered draconic scales and a severed arm were lying on the distant ground. This was what Linley had left behind from the sudden attack just now, which had injured him badly.

Even though he used Sovereign’s Might and even though his body’s defense was tough, in the face of the combined attack of seven Elders, he was lucky to stay alive.

“Linley, you have to be fine.” Delia’s body was trembling.

Right at this moment, a metallic lifeform hovering in the distance came to a halt, and quite a few people flew out from within it, all of them staring at Phusro, Elder Zabu, Elder Tewila, Elder Annecy, and the two battles going on between these combatants.

“A battle between Seven Star Fiends, and they’ve even used Sovereign’s Might!”

Shocked cries rang out.

“Quick, record it down. We can’t miss a battle on this level.”

Quite a few experts who trained in the ‘Elemental Laws of Water’ hurriedly set up ‘Scriber Recordings’, recording down the distant, incredibly rare battle between supreme experts. Not just them; even quite a members of the Azure Dragon clan were recording this battle.

Right at this moment...

“Rumble...” Beneath the ground, an enormous serpent seemed to be slithering about. The entire ground was rippling in waves, and wild bursts of energy were spreading about wantonly.

“There’s a battle underground!”

The many spectators all lowered their heads to watch.

“Linley!” Delia was extremely worried.

Deep within the ground, Linley was tunneling at high speed. The draconic scales around his chest were still shattered, while his entire right arm had been severed. The water-type Sovereign’s Might was currently slowly repairing Linley’s body.

After all, the more powerful a body, the slower the repair would be!

“Those three who used Sovereign’s Might are too strong!” Linley still felt that his head was in a daze. At the most dangerous juncture, he had used his Dragonform as well as the Sovereign’s Might for defense.

Of those seven, two specialized in material attacks while the other five used spiritual attacks!

The physical attacks were used by Tempah and Nice, two Elders who had used Sovereign’s Might. By joining forces, not only had the two been able to break through Linley’s armor formed from Sovereign’s Might, they had also shattered Linley’s draconic scales...

If Linley’s defense had been just slightly weaker, he probably would’ve been finished.

“Fortunately, that person isn’t pursuing me.” Linley still clearly remembered how that elfin-looking gray-robed man who had used a drop of Sovereign’s Might had been able to, with a single spiritual attack, easily locate the weakness in Linley’s Sovereign artifact. Luckily, Linley had gone all out, and by using both the Sovereign’s Might as well as his hereditary azure light to defend, he had been able to withstand it.

“If that elfin-looking gray-robed man attacked again along with those four behind me with another barrage of spiritual attacks, I wouldn’t be able to take it.” Linley was truly stunned.

“Rumble...”

An enormous black claw suddenly emerged, effortlessly slicing through the impeding earth and clawing towards Linley.

“Haaaargh!” Linley turned and swept outwards with his left arm, which struck out as though it were an enormous millstone slowly grinding away. Space itself seemed to turn sluggish, until that moment when it clashed against the enormous black claw... “Bang!” The colliding blows caused space itself to be torn apart.

“Linley, you won’t be able to escape!” A furious roar echoed in Linley’s mind.

Linley turned to look.

The earth behind him was roiling as five figures sped over quickly.

Linley’s face couldn’t help but change. “So fast!”

Because Linley had just launched an attack, the five Elders had immediately hurried over and followed him. The leader was the big-bearded Elder Tempah, and currently, his entire body was covered with a black light which emanated the aura of Destruction.

The power of his material attack, when paired with Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might, wasn’t weaker than Linley’s at all!

“Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might and Death-type Sovereign’s Might truly are troublesome.” Linley still felt the pain in his shattered arm. The joint attacks from those two had left vestige’s of Sovereign’s Might in his body.

This was causing the healing speed to be even slower.

“If the only one present was this big-bearded fellow, I could still battle. But these other four...” Linley felt his head hurt. The five were in constant pursuit in a group, not giving him a chance to deal with them singly.

“Swoosh!” Linley suddenly burst into the skies.

“Bang!” Tempah and the other five Elders all immediately charged upwards as well.

The many clansmen of the Azure Dragon clan, as well as the spectators in the other metallic lifeform, were all watching this battle. Right at this tense moment...with a ‘Bang!’ sound, the ground exploded. Linley and five Elders charged outwards in rapid succession.

“Five on one?” Quite a few people called out in shock.

“Quick, record it down.” Those people immediately set up more scryer recordings.

As for Delia, when she saw Linley, her tears began to fall. “Linley!” This was because she saw that Linley’s arm was severed, and that blood was still flowing out. There was an even more astonishingly large hole in his chest, and the whiteness of his bones could be seen.

There was a black, foggy aura covering his chest. Linley wanted to repair himself, but the speed was very slow.

“Why haven’t you caught Linley yet? Why haven’t you killed him?” Elder Zabu, currently battling Phusro, saw that Linley and those five Elders had just emerged. He couldn’t help but feel frantically angry, and he immediately sent out his divine sense and shouted towards them.

“Elder Zhabu, the power of Linley’s Gravitational Space is simply too great. I have to help the other four Elders to jointly resist the power of that gravity. Otherwise, we’ll be taken on one at a time by him!” Elder Tempah hurriedly sent back through divine sense as well.

But just as his words were finished...

“BANG!”

Elder Annecy’s body collapsed from the skies. She was dead!

Elder Tewila shouted, “Linley, I’ll come help you!” As he spoke, he charged over and attacked.

“Perfect timing.” Linley was overjoyed. Although he had used his Gravitational Space, his Gravitational Space was an earth-type ultimate technique. When using water-type Sovereign’s Might to execute it, although the power was still great, it wasn’t too extravagant.

It was indeed hard for him to battle five others on his own.

“Haha, your Sovereign’s Might has almost been used up. I want to see how you’ll continue to contain me!” Phusro’s loud, delighted laugh echoed forth. The ‘Dance of Life’ was a trapping technique, after all.

Filling all those ten million branches with Sovereign’s Might exhausted it very quickly, as it the technique consumed an astonishing amount of energy.

“Tempah, you must kill Linley!!!”

A fierce bellow rang out. The elfin-looking Elder Zabu roared, and his entire body suddenly emanated countless specks of green light, which shot out in every direction at an astonishing speed.

“BOOM!” Phusro had finally, with great effort, used his long awl to kill Elder Zabu, the most powerful person on the enemy side!

However...those countless green specks of light still shot out at high speed, and many people who weren't able to dodge in time had the green specks of light shoot into their bodies, and they all fell down from the skies, one by one.

“Delia, careful.” Bebe hurriedly pushed Delia aside as countless specks of green light directly entered Bebe's body.

“Wade.” Delia didn't care about herself. Using her own body, she completely covered up Wade, and as she did, two specks of green light directly entered Delia's body.

Right at this moment...

“Bang!” Linley and Elder Tempah clashed against each other fiercely, and their bodies were sent flying apart. However, just as their bodies flew apart, Linley saw from the corner of his eyes...

Silently, soundlessly...

Her long hair was dancing in the wind. Delia had covered up Wade with her entire body, protecting him completely. She still had tears in the corner of her eyes, which caught and reflected a ray of sunlight. Just like that, Delia slowly, gently drifted down from the skies...

“Waaaaaaaaa!” Wade suddenly began to sob.

This sob was like a knife cutting into Linley's heart. In stunned silence, tears rolled down Linley's cheeks.

“No....” A desolate sound echoed in the heavens.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 46, Spare No One!

Linley felt his heart be instantly ripped apart!

When Linley was together with Delia, he felt as though he were a lonely boat who had found his harbor, with his heart at peace. Their souls had become deeply intertwined, and neither could leave the other!

“No...no...no way...” Linley couldn’t accept it.

He would rather die than see what he just saw.

How many years had it been? From that first time when he had learned of his father’s death...when he had watched as Grandpa Doehring sacrificed himself for him...those two events had caused Linley to sink into an abyss of despair. Ever since those two times, Linley had buried hatred deep into his heart and then encased it in ice.

But because of Delia...

Linley once more felt the warmth of family. In front of Delia, Linley didn’t have to hold back anything. His heart and Delia’s heart were completely joined. Linley felt that he was blissful, that the heavens had treated him generously...

Because he had Delia, his partner in life!

But today...

His father had died. Grandpa Doehring had died. Those two blows had caused Linley to nearly collapse. But the blow he suffered today was even fiercer than the previous two. Delia had been together with Linley for simply too long!

A thousand years of taking care of each other. Their lives had become one!

“This...” Phusro was stunned as well.

“Delia!” Bebe was stunned as well. He, linked together spiritually with Linley, could feel the despair and deathly loneliness radiating out from Linley’s soul. Bebe couldn’t help but feel his own soul quiver.

What sort of despair was this?

“Boss!” Bebe was about to cry as well.

“Rumble...” Tempah, his entire body covered with that black aura, once more violently charged towards Linley, while Linley just stood there stupidly.

“Die.” Tempah was shaking from excitement.

He sent a full-force fist smashing towards Linley’s head. Before his fist arrived, the spatial ripples it generated arrived, striking at Linley’s head. Linley, rather numbly, turned to look, but all he saw in front of his eyes was a fist glowing with flowing black light.

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah!” Linley seemed to have gone insane, as he let out a terrifying howl!

His undamaged left arm suddenly swung out, snatching the oncoming fist, delivering it into his own chest. “Bang!” The fierce punch cracked the Sovereign’s Might covering Linley’s body, smashing against his chest.

“CRUNCH!” His ribs shattered and his chest caved in.

“Eh?” Tempah was completely stunned. What was Linley doing?

“Whoosh!” Linley’s draconic tail suddenly swung over, stretching out towards Tempah and wrapping itself around him. Linley’s left arm was clutching Tempah’s right arm, while his draconic tail was binding Tempah, pulling him into a tight embrace.

Tempah wasn’t able to break free!

The two stared face to face, right next to each other!

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah!” Linley seemed like a madman. He suddenly turned his head, ramming it viciously against the opponent. That fierce, azure-golden spiked horn in Linley’s forehead, covered with that azure light, stabbed down viciously.

“F*ck off!” Tempah wanted to break free.

But Linley’s Sovereign’s Might was on full power, and water-type Sovereign’s Might was durable to begin with. Even worse, Linley’s body was more powerful than his to begin with. Tempah, break free? Unlikely!

“Die!!!” Linley howled ferociously like a madman! His head savagely, repeatedly slammed towards his enemy’s, and so too did that fierce horned spike, covered with Sovereign’s Might!

What was the toughest, sharpest part of Linley’s body?

It wasn’t his fist. It wasn’t his scales. It was these spikes!

They were just like the spikes of an Armored Razorback Wurm, which before death would unleash its most powerful attack by blasting out these spikes. An ‘Armored Razorback Wurm’ of the ninth rank was able to use these spikes to pierce through the body of a Saint-level magical beast. Linley’s spikes, in turn, had been strengthened and intensified by the blood essence of the Azure Dragon, as well as that drop of Sovereign’s Might.

The sharpness of those spikes was utterly terrifying.

For Tempah to have his head struck by Linley’s...and especially given that Tempah’s body was inferior to Linley’s to begin with...

After his protective barrier of Sovereign’s Might was broken through after three successive ‘stabs’, Tempah only had enough time to let out a bellow, and then stopped making any noise.

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

In the blink of an eye, Linley’s head had smashed into the opponent’s countless times.

Bebe, Phusro, Tewila, and even those other four enemy Elders were staring in disbelief. Tempah’s entire head had been slammed into pulp. His divine spark had been knocked flying...but Linley continued to smash.

Smash his head. Smash his body!

Blood flew everywhere. Muddy bits of flush flew everywhere. The sight was utterly unbearable! Linley's eyes were as crimson as blood, and he was utterly wild.

"Boss..." Bebe had never seen Linley go so berserk before. Through their soul connection, he could feel that Linley had completely descended into a mindless savagery, the throes of which caused Bebe to tremble.

"This..." The four Elders were stunned as well.

How could a battle between Seven Star Fiends end up like this?

Linley didn't block Tempah's attack, but rather grappled Tempah, then used his own head to smash him to death?

As they looked at Linley, whose arm was severed, chest was caved in, and whose face was covered with blood, they felt their hearts grow cold.

"Linley, stop, stop!" Phusro shouted through divine sense. "Stop immediately!" Phusro rushed over, giving Linley a vicious punch, and Linley's body couldn't help but tremble.

This punch brought Linley back to sanity.

"What am I doing?" Linley felt as though he had gone completely insane. He then looked sideways at the distant Delia, lying on the ground. His eyes couldn't help but immediately turn red once again, and then he turned to look at the other four Elders.

Those four Elders hadn't used Sovereign's Might!

The four Elders had been stunned by Linley's display of savagery. Only now did they come to their senses.

"Elder Zabu and the others died. We aren't of any use here. The appearance of this Phusro was completely out of our expectations. Let's flee." The four Elders hurriedly spoke through divine sense, and then they fled in every direction.

But Linley just let out a bellow.

"Rumble..."

Azure light spread out everywhere to a diameter of hundreds of meters, trapping all four of those Elders in the distance who had sought to flee within. The azure light then transformed into an enormous cube!

Blackstone Prison!

A Blackstone Prison formed from Sovereign's Might!

This was water-type Sovereign's Might. Although it wasn't earth-type, it was still far more powerful than Linley's own 'God-level divine power'. The 'durability' was extremely powerful in particular. These four Elders, in turn, didn't have Sovereign's power.

Trapped within this Blackstone Prison, there was no way they could flee at all.

"Linley..." Phusro wanted to speak.

"Phusro. Tewila. Don't interfere. Leave this Blackstone Prison. Let me handle the four of them!" Linley growled, and a corridor split open from above. Phusro and Tewila let out sighs, then flew out.

Within the Blackstone Prison, Linley could defeat them one by one.

Given that the enemies were not in possession of Sovereign's Might, this was a battle between two people on completely different levels.

Darkness. Not a single hint of light could be seen.

The four Elders were trapped into different parts of the 'cube'. All of them wildly struck the walls, but how could they possibly break through this cube formed from Sovereign's Might?

Within one of the rooms.

"It's all over." The gray-robed Elder was in complete despair.

"Whoosh!" The wall suddenly split open, and a person walked in.

The gray-robed Elder's heart trembled as he looked at the Dragonformed Linley, his entire body covered with blood.

"It's all because of you." A growling voice.

"Whoosh!" Linley charged forward. Shocked, the gray-robed Elder wanted to resist, but a ray of spiritual energy spread forth. This was the 'Spiritual Chaos' formed from Sovereign's Might, and the gray-robed Elder instantly fell into a stunned state.

When Linley had dealt against Tempah and the rest of the five, he could have used this technique to put the other four into a stupor. However, Elder Tempah had Sovereign's Might to protect himself, and so Linley wouldn't have been able to influence him at all.

Tempah naturally would protect the other four in turn.

This was the reason why Linley hadn't used this technique yet. But now...the gray-robed Elder, under the effect of the 'Spiritual Chaos', was nothing more than a ragdoll target!

"Hello, Linley. My name is Delia..." In Linley's mind, that scene of his first meeting with Delia in the wind-style magic class at the Ernst Institute drifted to his mind. At that time, Delia was just an adorable little girl.

"BANG!" Linley's draconic scale covered fist smashed the gray-robed Elder's head.

Linley's form moved towards the direction of another room with an Elder.

"Linley, before I leave, can I hug you?" When Linley's father had died that year...that dark night in Wushan township...Delia had said that she wanted to give Linley a hug before she left.

But that time, Delia had kissed him instead.

"BANG!" Yet another gray-robed Elder died.

Linley walked forward, completely emotionless. In front of him, another corridor appeared within the wall.

"Milord, there's a person named Delia outside. She says that she was your classmate and that she wishes to see you." That first time they had met again after their ten years of separation. At that time, Linley had already become the world-renown Master Linley, while Delia was the Envoy of the Yulan Empire.

"Haaaaaargh!"

A fist swung out like a mountain, smashing against the body of a gray-robed Elder. Immediately, with a 'bang' sound, space itself exploded as a large hole appeared in space. Half of the gray-robed Elder's body was blasted apart.

Linley, his face expressionless, took a few more steps forward, entering another wall.

"Delia, what is it?"

"I cried." Delia clutched at Linley's chest. "I want to cry. When I think about how in the past, you were together with Alice, I want to cry. When I think about how I waited for you for ten years, I want to cry. Wuuu...."

The night of their wedding. Delia had been in his arms, throwing a tantrum.

After Linley killed the final gray-robed Elder, the Blackstone Prison vanished. That drop of Sovereign's Might had been completely used up as well.

"Delia..." Linley murmured.

His tears fell down, mixing in with the blood on his face.

The entire world was silent. The members of the Azure Dragon clan and the distant spectators didn't dare make any sound. They could all sense a terrible, deathly pressure. They just watched quietly as Linley flew towards Delia.

"Waaaaa....waaaaa....." Wade's sobbing echoed in the mountains and forests.

Linley, hearing his son's sobs, couldn't help but tremble.

Linley quietly sat down next to Delia's body. Delia's face was still wet with tears. These were the tears she had shed upon seeing Linley be in dire straits during the battle. Linley reached his hand out, gently examining her. As of this moment...Delia's body didn't have any aura at all.

"Waaaaaaaaa...." Wade was sobbing nonstop.

Linley returned to human form as well. He stretched his arms out, picking up Wade. Wade, in his father's arms, continued to sob.

"Don't cry, Wade." Linley said softly.

"Boss, it's all my fault." Bebe was agonized as well.

"Linley, Delia isn't dead!" A sound rang out. Linley's entire body shuddered, and he suddenly rose to his feet, hurriedly turning to look towards Phusro. In disbelief, he said, "Phusro, what did you say?"

Phusro said seriously, "Linley, I'll tell you this. Delia isn't dead. Not only is she not dead, all of the other people who were struck by that elfin-looking Elder's dying blow aren't dead either."

"But...but..." Linley couldn't sense any aura from Delia at all.

Phusro said with certainty, "That elfin-looking Elder's dying blow sent out nearly a million green specks of light flying out. Many of those who were hit by just a single speck of green light all fell. Can it be that you think...that elfin-looking Elder was capable of killing a million Highgods with a single technique?"

Linley came to his senses.

Right. No matter how powerful an Elder was, he would at most be able to kill a hundred or nearly a thousand people with a technique. But to kill a million Highgods? Impossible! Utterly impossible!

In truth, when the elfin-looking Elder had released those green specks of light, although he had sent nearly a million, in reality, because the people in the area were tightly clustered together, most of the green specks of light were 'blocked' by the people standing in front.

It would be amazing if even ten thousand died.

"Then Delia isn't dead...but why doesn't she have any aura at all?" Linley turned to look at Delia. He sent a ray of spiritual energy out, slowly sending it into Delia's mind.

Within Delia's sea of consciousness, her divine spark was still there. Her sea of consciousness, however, wasn't moving at all. It was deathly still, without any hint of a living aura.

"That elfin-looking Elder should have been an expert of the Edric clan, which moved here from the Higher Plane of Life. He trained in the 'Edicts of Life'." Phusro said solemnly. "Although the people hit aren't dead, there isn't much of a difference between their state and death."

Linley hurriedly shook his head.

And then, he looked at Phusro. "Phusro, tell me. What is going on with Delia? Can she be saved?"

Phusro let out a low sigh. "Linley, the most powerful healing stems from the 'Laws of Life', but it is also experts of the Edicts of Life who have the most bizarre ways of attacking and harming the soul. That elfin Elder was an elite amongst them. Before dying, he released that technique, spreading out countless specks of green light, each of which is actually just a 'seed'."

"Seed?" Linley didn't understand.

"Linley, a person's foundation is the soul!" Phusro explained. "That green light burrows into the soul and begins to devour the energy of the soul, converting it to energy for its own use."

"Devour...convert?" Linley began to understand.

"A single speck of green light is very weak. Compared to the entire soul, it is miniscule. However, the single speck of green light, with each devour, will duplicate and result in two specks of green light. And then, those two specks of green light will continue to devour and become four specks. Four will then become eight...and as this continues..." Phusro's eyes were filled with awe as well. "It is very terrifying! Although the soul of a Highgod is very strong, under this sort of devouring, the soul will constantly weaken. There will come the day when one's soul will completely transform into green specks of light, at which point, Delia will die!"

Linley felt that this was unbelievable.

Souls could be described as strong, but also as fragile. Once they were shattered, they would be finished. But this devouring...it wouldn't immediately cause the soul to be destroyed. Because, to be precise, the green light was merging with the soul and was part of it.

Actually, this was a sort of soul transformation process. Once the transformation was complete, the soul would be finished.

"Then is there a way to save her?" Linley immediately asked. This Phusro had a very high degree of attainment in the soul as well.

“This has reached deep into her soul. Saving her will be very hard.” Phusro shook his head. “I only train in the Laws of Fire. My attacks are powerful, but my healing...alas!”

Linley’s face immediately changed.

“However, supreme experts who train in the Edicts of Life should be able to save Delia. However, we have to hurry to the Skyrite Mountains.” Phusro said. “But in the Skyrite Mountains, the Four Divine Beasts clan does not train the Edicts of Life. If we go to other places to find experts...there’s no time, there’s no time!!!”

There was no time!

These words caused Linley’s entire body to sway.

“There’s no time?” Linley was frantic.

“There’s too few people in the Infernal Realm who train in the Edicts of Life. The eight great clans do, but they are your enemies. How could they possibly help?” Phusro shook his head and sighed.

“No. We can go to another place.” Linley said hurriedly.

“Impossible. There’s no time. Based on the rate at which the devouring occurs...in a year or so, Delia’s soul will be completely devoured.” Phusro said resignedly. “In Indigo Prefecture, I have no idea of any other power aside from the eight great clans that has supreme experts who specialize in the Edicts of Life.”

Linley lowered his head to look at Delia.

Delia was lying there quietly.

“No...no...” Linley couldn’t accept it.

Although she didn’t die, in the future, she would?

But in a short year, even at maximum speed, he would still be within Indigo Prefecture. But within Indigo Prefecture, the strongest forces were the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans, while only the Edric clan from the Higher Plane of Life possessed supreme experts who trained in the Edicts of Life.

The other powers?

The Four Divine Beasts clan didn’t have any such experts, at least.

What to do?

“Delia...” Linley was going completely mad.

Phusro looked about, seeing many Azure Dragon clansmen lying on the ground. “So many people!” He let out a sigh. “Although those green specks of light are weak, they are very hard to deal with. Ordinary Highgods aren’t able to resist them, unless they have soul-protecting artifacts or have extremely powerful souls. But of course, one can block it if one had Sovereign’s Might. This elfin Elder truly was vicious.”

Linley, lost in his grief, suddenly heard those words, ‘Sovereign’s Might’.

“Sovereign’s Might?” Linley’s body trembled.

“Sovereign’s Might can resist it!” Linley’s heart shook!

“Linley, what is it?” Phusro looked at him. Linley suddenly turned to stare at him. “Phusro, did you just say that Sovereign’s Might can block it? Are you saying that if I had given Delia a drop of Sovereign’s Might and she had been struck, she wouldn’t die?”

“Right. The elfin Elder’s attack is powerful, but once it encounters Sovereign’s Might, it will still dissipate. How could it possibly break through the defense of Sovereign’s Might?” Phusro nodded. “However, don’t be too heartbroken. After all, you need to use Sovereign’s Might while battling as well.”

Linley was stunned.

Battle? Battle?!

But he had three drops of it!

“Why didn’t I give any to Delia? Why?” Linley’s face turned ashen. “Why didn’t I give it to her? Why? Why?!” With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved a drop of Sovereign’s might. Beneath the light of the sun, it seemed so resplendent.

“This...” Seeing this drop of Sovereign’s Might, Phusro was stunned as well.

“Waaaaaaa....” Wade’s sobbing cries continued unabated.

Linley lowered his head to look at the sobbing Wade, then at the ‘slumbering’ Delia, and then at this drop of Sovereign’s Might. His gaze turned more and more savage, and the flesh on his face slowly began to twitch as his face slowly turned purple. And then, a hint of blood slowly began to leak from his mouth.

“Aaaaaaaaah!!!!” A howl of incomparable agony ripped forth from Linley’s mouth, shaking the world.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 47, Begging for Salvation

“It’s me. It’s my fault. If I had given a drop of Sovereign’s Might to Delia, she wouldn’t die!”

“Why didn’t I give it to Delia. Why. WHY!!!”

Endless guilt wracked Linley’s chest, with regret striking viciously at his soul. Linley’s entire mind was in a state of chaos, and had sunken into a state of endless remorse.

Bebe, Phusro, and Tewila look at each other, worry appearing on their faces.

“Waaaaa...waaaaaaa!” Little Wade continuously cried, and his sobs seemed to be more ear-piercing than ever before in that utterly silent mountainous area. Linley felt that each cry from Wade stabbed against his heart!

“Don’t cry, Wade, don’t cry.” Holding Wade, Bebe was growing frantic as well.

“Boss!” Bebe said frantically.

“Linley!” Phusro called out worriedly as well.

But Linley didn’t seem to hear anything. He was completely lost in his regret and grief. The look on his face was one which made others tremble upon beholding.

“Right!” Linley let out a sudden growl. “It was my selfishness! I always thought about my own safety, and I didn’t think about Delia. I kept the Sovereign’s Might on my own person this entire time. It was my selfishness. I was too selfish!!!”

Self-criticism. Self-hatred!

Linley, his thoughts in a jumble, had pushed the blame squarely onto his own shoulders, due to his ‘selfishness’.

Actually, Delia was too weak. Even if she had Sovereign’s Might, she wouldn’t be able to defeat a Seven Star Fiend. It was only natural that Linley should be the one to use Sovereign’s Might to protect Delia.

If Linley truly was selfish...

Then when facing the combined strike of those seven Elders, he wouldn’t have pushed Delia aside at that critical moment, thereby wasting precious time. After all, at that time, he could have dodged instead.

All seven of those attacks had landed.

Linley had nearly died. Although he hadn’t died, the protective armor of Sovereign’s Might had been broken through, and even his body had been crippled.

However, Linley’s thoughts had entered a state of confusion, and others were completely unable to dissuade him.

“It was my selfishness. It’s all my fault. If I had given Sovereign’s Might to Delia, she wouldn’t die.” Linley’s mind was utterly chaotic. These words were the only thing that consistently echoed within his consciousness.

“Linley!” Phusro suddenly roared. “Hurry up and seize every moment to save Delia. By wasting time here, YOU ARE KILLING DELIA!!!”

These words suddenly brought Linley back to his senses.

He looked at Delia, lying there on the ground. Phusro’s words suddenly brought Linley back into clear-mindedness. “Every moment, Delia’s soul is being devoured and transformed. I can’t waste any time, I can’t!”

By now, Linley’s right arm had already grown out to the elbow. The more powerful the body, the slower the recovery.

“Phusro.” Linley turned to look at Phusro. “My mind is in shambles right now. Tell me, what should I do? What are my best options for saving Delia?”

Linley, in his current state, truly wasn’t suited for making decisions.

Phusro let out a mental sigh of relief. For Linley to be able to say this meant that his mind was clear, at least. Phusro immediately said solemnly, “Linley, neither you nor I are as familiar with the experts of the Indigo Prefecture as your Patriarch, Gislason. Gislason is the leader of the Four Divine Beasts clan, and he knows far more than we do! Your Patriarch will know more than anyone else as to who will be able to save Delia. Perhaps the Four Divine Beasts clan itself has someone capable of rescuing Delia.”

Linley’s eyes immediately lit up.

“Right. The Four Divine Beasts clan has existed for so long. Perhaps it truly does have a supreme expert capable of saving Delia.” A hint of hope appeared in Linley’s mind.

“Right now, we need to hurry back to the Skyrite Mountains. Normally, metallic lifeforms will take nearly two months, but if we travel by day and by night without resting, we should be able to get there in ten days or half a month. Once we reach the Skyrite Mountains, there’ll be more people and more ideas.” Phusro said hurriedly.

Linley made up his mind as well.

“That’s what we’ll do, then.” Linley’s body once more Dragonformed. In terms of flying speed, his Dragonform’s flying speed was indeed much faster.

Linley lowered his head to look at Delia, lying there on the ground. Delia looked as though she were asleep. Linley said gently, “Delia, you have to hold on.” Stretching out his left hand, he took Delia into his arms.

“Phusro, please hold Wade.” Linley said. “We’ll immediately head out.”

“Alright.” Phusro took Wade from Bebe’s arms.

“Boss, don’t be too heartbroken. Delia will definitely recover.” Bebe said consolingly. Linley forced out a smile, then nodded slightly. “Right. Bebe, you stay with the others. Phusro and I will go back first.”

Bebe nodded, and then he watched as Linley and Phusro pierced through the skies, disappearing into the horizon.

Bebe's eyes had tears within them as well. Raising his head upwards, he looked at the sky. "Overgods...the Boss has already lost his father and his Grandpa Doebling. No matter what, you can't let Delia die as well. If Delia dies, then the Boss..."

Bebe and Linley had lived so many years together. He understood Linley very well.

No matter what sort of difficult circumstances or dire straits Linley was in, he wasn't afraid at all and would face them head on. But...when those close to him left, Linley suffered terrifying emotional blows.

"Alright. Everyone, hurry into the metallic lifeform. We'll make haste back home." Tewila's voice rang out. "All of you, stop being sad. Move all of our unconscious clansmen into the metallic lifeform. We will hurry backwards."

It wasn't just Delia who was unconscious. There were quite a few clansmen lying on the ground, while quite a few onlookers were injured as well. When they learned that these people weren't dead yet, they too felt a hint of new hope.

The Azure Dragon clansmen entered the metallic lifeform, and then it once more pierced through the skies, also making haste and flying towards the Skyrise Mountains.

When the Azure Dragon clansmen left, the only people remaining were those who were in that other metallic lifeform.

"Too powerful. Especially that expert from the Azure Dragon clan. He was actually able to fight five other experts by himself...and slaughtered them all!" These people weren't saddened for Delia, only stunned by this battle.

"That gray-robed who died was powerful as well...the one who sent all those terrifying green specks of light out."

"Did anyone hear what that expert of the Azure Dragon clan is named? I thought I heard that big fellow with long red hair shout 'Linley' loudly."

"Right. He is named Linley. I heard it as well."

"This Linley, judging from his power, has to at least be an Elder of the Azure Dragon clan."

A hubbub of conversation...but then, these spectators who had watched the battle and recorded it down with scribe recordings all returned to their own metallic lifeform and left.

Moments later...

Multiple figures flew over at high speed to the battlefield.

"Even Elder Zabu died. The eight Elders are all dead!"

.....

In mid-air, a fiery light instantly streaked in from the southern horizon, arriving at the northern skies.

Linley and Phusro were currently flying at maximum speed. However, even Dragonformed, in terms of flying speed, Linley was still far inferior compared to Phusro. Thus, Phusro spread out his energy, enveloping Linley within it and 'carrying' him.

This caused their speed to rise to a higher level.

Linley lowered his head, looking at Delia. Delia's eyes were closed, and she was in a state of complete unconsciousness. Linley's arms were now completely healed.

"Delia, you have to be fine."

Linley spoke very softly. He felt boundless grief and regret towards Delia. If Delia truly were to die, Linley didn't know what he would do in the future. He wouldn't be able to accept it at all.

Phusro, seeing Linley like this, couldn't help but sigh.

"Can love truly cause a person to become like this?" Phusro said in his heart. He had been captured and tamed by Elquin when he was a Saint, and had always been used as a little golden kitten, without being given any chance to experience love.

"Linley, don't worry. Given my speed, we'll reach the Skyrite Mountains very soon." Phusro consoled.

"Right. Phusro, thank you for this. Truly." Linley, although frantic, still spoke with gratitude.

"Thank me for what? It's my fault, in a way. I let that elfin Elder have the opportunity to release that final attack." Phusro said guiltily. In truth, that Elder Zabu was the most powerful of those eight Elders.

He was so powerful that he nearly had the strength of an Asura. Once he also used a drop of Sovereign's Might, his strength was indeed terrifying.

"It isn't your fault. That person truly was powerful." Linley still remembered how, when he had suffered the combined attacks of those seven Elders, the most dangerous one of them had been that elfin Elder. With but a single attack, he had nearly caused Linley to be finished.

"I'm still not strong enough." Linley stared into the distance.

The two of them, transformed into that 'fiery light', continued to fly towards the horizon at high speed.

And finally, they arrived at the Skyrite Mountains!

After having flown for six days and a night, they arrived at the Skyrite Mountains just as nightfall came.

Linley, upon seeing the distant Dragon Avenue of the Skyrite Mountains, felt his heart tremble. While flying forward at high speed, he immediately called out frantically, "Patriarch, PATRIARCH!!!" Linley's roars shook the air above the entire Skyrite Mountains.

"Who is it? Halt!" The patrolling warriors of the Skyrite Mountains hurriedly shouted.

Linley and Phusro were flying too quickly. Their bodies were surrounded with fiery light as well, making it even harder for those patrolling warriors to see them clearly.

"Whoosh!" Phusro immediately retracted his fire-type divine power, and those patrolling warriors were immediately able to see the two of them clearly. One of them was in Dragonform, and clearly was a member of the Azure Dragon clan. They all couldn't help but feel relieved.

"It is Elder Linley!" Immediately, some patrolling warriors recognized him.

That savage, spike-studded Dragonform had become Linley's trademark.

“Linley, what is it?” A figure flew over at high speed. It was Elder Garvey. Elder Garvey, seeing Linley look so frantic, with his entire body stained with blood, couldn’t help but ask in a hurry, “What happened? What’s wrong with Delia?”

“Delia, she...” Before Linley even had a chance to reply...

“Linley!” A voice rang out, and a powerfully built figure with azure hair flew out at high speed. It was the Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan, Gislason. Gislason immediately saw Phusro. “What happened?”

“We were attacked. Delia is now in critical condition.” Phusro said hurriedly.

Gislason, seeing the situation, immediately said, “Come to my place right away.” As he spoke, he immediately led Linley and the others towards his residence.

Within the residence of the Patriarch. The main hall.

Linley gently placed Delia onto a seat, and then turned his head to look at Gislason. “Patriarch, Delia suffered a spiritual attack from an Elder of the Edric clan, of the eight great clans...”

“The Edric clan? The Edicts of Life?” Gislason’s face changed, and he immediately used his spiritual sense to probe Delia’s situation.

Linley, keeping hope alive in his mind, watched this scene. Not only was the Patriarch physically powerful, he was also extremely formidable with respect to the soul. Perhaps the Patriarch might have some method for saving Delia. Linley waited, and as he did, his heart was trembling.

Elder Garvey and Phusro just stood there, not daring to say a word.

“Formidable, formidable!” Gislason sighed in amazement.

“What is it?” Linley said hurriedly.

Gislason turned to look at Linley. He said solemnly, “The devouring transformation in Delia’s soul isn’t too bad right now. However, the devouring will grow faster and faster...I’ve never imagined that the Edicts of Life contained a technique like this. With regards to this, I...alas...” Gislason shook his head and sighed.

Linley was stunned.

“But don’t grow frantic. I can’t save her, but that doesn’t mean others can’t either.” Gislason said hurriedly.

Right at this moment, two people charged in, one of which was Forhan.

“What on earth is going on?” Forhan said frantically. When he saw Linley in the corner of his eyes, his face couldn’t help but change. Linley was actually still alive...this was completely out of his expectations.

“Forhan, it’s good that you are here. You and Garvey, hurry over to Bloodbath Gorge and have the Grand Elder and the others come. Oh, right, hurry and ask the other three clan leaders to come as well. Hurry!” Gislason shouted.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 48, Their Proposals

“Yes, Patriarch!”

Elders Garvey and Forhan didn’t dare to dawdle, immediately departing towards Bloodbath Gorge. The entire main hall immediately became silent, and even Wade had fallen asleep in Phusro’s arms.

“Wade...give me the child.” Linley said.

Phusro handed the child to Linley. Linley, holding his son in his arms, looked at the nearby unconscious Delia, a sour feeling in his heart.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” Multiple other Elders hurried over. Just as they were about to speak, Gislason immediately sent out his divine sense and barked, “Be silent. Linley’s wife has just suffered an attack from an expert of the ‘Edric’ clan of the eight great clans. All of you who specialize in the soul, go take a look and see if you can save her.”

“You all came?” Linley looked in surprised delight at these Elders.

“Hurry over and take a look and see if you can save Delia.” Linley was at the point where whenever he saw someone, he would want them to go take a look.

The many Elders glanced at each other, and then they all walked towards Delia’s side. A silver-haired Elder said, “Then I’ll give it a try first.” As the Second Elder, he had reached an exceedingly high level of accomplishment with regards to the soul.

“Phusro.” Gislason led Phusro to one side. “The Lord Prefect’s...”

“This isn’t the time for discussing that.” Phusro couldn’t help but frown.

Gislason was startled. He then glanced sideways at Linley, then nodded towards Phusro. “I understand. Right. What happened? You, Tewila, and Linley were present on this journey. How could this have happened to Delia? Tell me this story in detail.”

As the Patriarch, Gislason knew that something was off.

“Hmph. It’s all due to the situation between your Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans.” Phusro let out a low snort. Clearly, he was very dissatisfied. As Phusro saw it, Linley had been harmed by the Four Divine Beasts clan.

And then, Phusro described what happened in detail. “At first, Linley and I were riding in that metallic lifeform as we left Meer City...” Phusro gave a detailed description of what had happened, from start to finish.

At the same time, those Elders standing next to Delia were all using their own spiritual energy to enter Delia’s mind, investigating the situation.

“How is it?” Linley held Wade as he looked at these Elders. He felt his heart trembling nonstop.

“Nothing I can do.” The silver-haired Elder shook his head and sighed. “These green specks of lights are too obstinate. They constantly devour, and as they do, they also become part of the soul itself. To use brute force to kill and eradicate these green spots of light will cause Delia to die immediately! To cure Delia will be hard. Very hard!” When he said those two words, ‘very hard’, the silver-haired Elder stopped speaking.

Linley hurriedly looked towards the other Elders.

The other Elders shook their heads as well.

“Linley, don’t be impatient. In our Four Divine Beasts clan, the most proficient at the soul are those members of the Vermillion Bird clan. They possessed the ‘Flames of Rebirth’, and perhaps...they’ll have some method for curing Delia.” The silver-haired Elder said.

“Right. Flames of Rebirth!” A hint of hope appeared in Linley’s mind.

Right at this moment, Linley felt space shudder. He couldn’t help but turn to look, and he saw multiple figures descending from the air. There were dozens of figures!

“Elder Brother!” A deep voice rang out. It was the Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan.

The other three clan leaders, along with the Grand Elder, had all hurried over. Because of the commands of Gislason, a large group of people now filled this main hall, surging towards and looking at Linley and Delia.

“Phusro.” These people noticed Phusro as well.

“Hurry and take a look at Linley’s wife.” Phusro just said.

“What’s wrong with Linley’s wife?” An Elder of the Vermillion Bird clan asked hurriedly.

Holding his son, Linley immediately stood up. Looking at the throng of people, all of whom were the most elite members of the Four Divine Beasts clan, he immediately said, “My wife suffered a spiritual attack from an Elder of the Edric clan. As for her situation...everyone, come take a look. I hope that someone who has the ability to rescue my wife will do so.”

These Elders all noticed the look on Linley’s face and in his eyes. They could all sense that Linley’s heart had torn to pieces from worry.

“Everyone, go take a look. Perhaps someone will be able to do something.” Gislason said hurriedly.

The entire Four Divine Beasts clan had, in total, just seventy or eighty Elders. More than fifty of them were present here; clearly, the majority of them had hurried over. The first to take a look were the three clan leaders, who all investigated Delia’s situation.

And then, one Elder after another used their spiritual energy to investigate Delia’s situation.

Seeing the large group of people, Linley felt a hint of confidence in his mind. “With so many people present...much like how I can train in other Laws, the Elders of the clan might include someone who trains in the Edicts of Life. Perhaps someone will be able to rescue Delia. In addition, the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan is present. The Vermillion Bird clan possesses the ‘Flames of Rebirth’ ability. They can save themselves with it; perhaps they’ll also be able to save Delia.”

Holding his son, Linley just watched hopefully at these Elders.

He was like a drowning man staring at floating logs of wood.

Phusro, seeing the look on Linley's face, couldn't help but think back to the first time he had met Linley. At that time, although Linley had been in dire straits, he hadn't lost his composure like he currently had. "Alas..." Phusro sighed to himself.

Soon, the Elders completed their inspection. Some of them were extremely skilled with regards to the soul, but they all couldn't help but frown and shake their heads. Linley, seeing the looks on the faces of the Elders, especially when they shook their heads and sighed, felt his heart ache.

"How is it?" Linley's voice was hoarse now, but his gaze was firmly fixed upon the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan.

The Matriarch just turned to look at the others. "Everyone, do you have any solutions? Fourth Brother, your soul is very powerful. Do you have a solution?"

"This is too bizarre. I've never seen an attack like this." The muscular, brown-haired man said with a frown. "To save Delia, there must be a step-by-step treatment process, much like the devouring process itself. There must be a slow counter-devouring, converting the green spots of light back into spiritual energy. In addition...during the treatment process, there can't be any mistakes at all. If any energy ripples strike the soul, the soul might collapse. Difficult. Difficult. Difficult!"

Hearing these words, Linley's heart fell into an abyss.

"Vermillion Bird Matriarch, how about you?" Linley hurriedly looked towards her.

But the Matriarch just said: "Linley, I'm truly sorry. Our Vermillion Bird clan's ability to save ourselves isn't bad...but even if we save ourselves, it takes a tremendous amount of energy. Save others? We don't have that ability."

Linley couldn't help but look at each of the other Elders.

However, all of the Elders either sighed or shook their heads. None of them had any solutions.

"To quickly and yet methodically advance and counter-devour those green lights...it's too hard!" That brown-haired man shook his head. "As I see it, in the entire Infernal Realm, there are only a few people who train in certain other Laws and Edicts who can rescue her, but I can count those off on one hand. Other than them, only supreme experts who train in the Edicts of Life can save her."

Not just Edicts of Life. A supreme expert in the Edicts of Life.

If one trained in the Edicts of Fate, the Edicts of Death, it would also be possible. Only, the requirements for those people would be even higher. They would have to be at the absolute pinnacle of their fields, with their souls nearing the point of perfection.

The requirements for an expert in the Edicts of Life would be lower; generally speaking, anyone who had reached the level of that elfin Elder would be enough.

"Are there none amongst you who train in the Edicts of Life?" Linley asked, unwilling to give up.

The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan nodded. "There are. However, to reach the level of the person who launched that attack is difficult...just being able to execute an attack like this requires an astonishing level of understanding with regards to the soul."

"Ah!" The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan suddenly cried out. "My clan has a person who trains in the Edicts of Life, and his level of accomplishments is very high."

Linley immediately looked at her.

Gislason and Phusro all looked towards her as well.

The Matriarch said confidently, “His name is Kestrel [Kai’si’tai’er]. He’s not an Elder; he’s a Six Star Fiend. However, his level of accomplishments in the Edicts of Life is very high. I can’t say for certain as to whether or not Kestrel will be able to save Delia, but...he has a teacher whose name is Alfonsus [A’fang’sa’si]. Alfonsus is not a member of our Four Divine Beasts clan. He is a supreme expert who trains in the Edicts of Life. Last time, I heard from Kestrel that his teacher was right here in Indigo Prefecture! Kestrel might not be able to save Delia, but Alfonsus definitely will!”

Linley’s eyes immediately lit up.

Two experts in the Edicts of life had suddenly appeared.

“Hurry and summon Kestrel over.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan ordered a subordinate Elder of hers.

“Yes, Matriarch.” That Elder flew out at high speed.

Phusro laughed as he walked over. “Haha...Linley, I told you, right? At the Four Divine Beasts clan, there will definitely be a way to save Delia. If this Kestrel can’t do it, then his teacher definitely can. Don’t worry.”

Linley felt as the world, which had lost its color, suddenly became so bright and vivid once more, filled with hope!

Linley lowered his head to look at Delia. He said gently, “Delia, you have to hold on. There are two experts who train in the Edicts of Life. They will definitely save you. Definitely.”

He then looked at his son in his arms. Linley’s heart was filled with hope. “Everything will be well.”

In the midst of the Elders, Forhan looked at the expression on Linley’s face. In his heart, he snorted, “You really are lucky. You didn’t die. But it’s all for the best. Your wife is in such a state, causing you to be in such despair...I feel absolutely joyful to see you like this!”

“Linley.” A deep voice rang out, and Gislason walked over. “This time, not long after you left Meer City, you actually suffered an ambush from eight enemy Elders, and three of them immediately used Sovereign’s Might at the very beginning...this clearly was a premeditated ambush. How could the enemies have known about your whereabouts?”

Linley raised his head to look at Gislason.

“Patriarch, are you saying...?” Linley had a thought.

“A year or so ago, you rode that metallic lifeform to Meer City. In the past year, there have been three groups of visits on metallic lifeforms, but the eight great clans haven’t launched any attacks. But as soon as you leave Meer City, they attack? Clearly, they were tracking your whereabouts, resulting in them being able to arrange for their forces to lie in wait.” Gislason said. “How can the enemies know your whereabouts so clearly?”

Linley couldn’t help but nod.

“Perhaps someone in your clan revealed the secret.” Phusro snorted coldly. “Otherwise, how could they have found Linley so easily?”

“Phusro.” Gislason couldn’t help but frown and bark at him.

When Forhan heard these words, his pupils contracted. At this moment, Linley suddenly turned to look towards Forhan. Their gazes just so happened to meet, and Forhan couldn’t help but be surprised. “Is Linley suspecting me?”

“If someone revealed the secret...it had to have been him or his son.” Linley said to himself.

After all, in the clan, only the two of them had any grudges against him.

Right at this moment, two figures flew in from outside at high speed. Linley immediately turned to look, and his gaze immediately focused on a black-haired, handsome youth. This black-haired youth immediately walked towards the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan and said, “Matriarch!”

“Hurry over and take a look at Elder Linley’s wife and see if you can rescue her.” The Matriarch said.

“Yes.” The black-haired youth first nodded towards Linley, then looked towards Delia before closing his eyes in thought.

Linley watched this scene nervously.

But then, the black-haired youth opened his eyes, and he looked at Linley frantically. “Elder Linley, your wife’s situation is very terrible. There’s nobody in our clan capable of saving her.”

“But don’t you have a teacher...” Linley said worriedly.

“My teacher should be able to save her, but...although my teacher is within Indigo Prefecture, to go from the Skyrise Mountains to my teacher’s place is a roundtrip of half a year, even for Seven Star Fiends who are making haste. I’m worried that based on the speed at which this devouring is occurring, your wife won’t be able to hold on for that long!”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 49, Three Months

After Kestrel finished speaking, the entire hall immediately fell silent.

Linley was frantically pondering. “Although the teacher of this Kestrel is in Indigo Prefecture, the distance is too far. I don’t have enough time right now. If we make a round trip, there definitely won’t be enough time! Can it be that I’ll have to send Delia over there?”

If they sent Delia over, the amount of time it would take would definitely be much shorter.

But if they did that, then there wouldn’t be enough time to find anyone else who might also be able to save her.

“Kestrel!” Linley stared at him. “Tell me. If I send Delia to your teacher’s place, how likely is it that your teacher will be able to save Delia?”

Kestrel frowned. Hesitating momentarily, he stared at Linley then said with certainty, “If my teacher intervenes, although I can’t say he will definitely be successful, he has at least a 90% chance of success!”

“90%?” Linley turned, looking at the unconscious Delia.

Linley then turned his head to look at Patriarch Gislason. “Patriarch, I have no other options. I’ll have to send Delia to Mr. Alfonsus.”

Gislason was frowning, and he slowly shook his head. “Linley, don’t be impatient. There’s another way.”

“Another way?” Linley was stunned.

“Elder Brother.” That cold, arrogant-looking Patriarch of the White Tiger clan spoke out. “How about this. I’ll personally pay a visit and bring that Alfonsus over. A round trip for a Seven Star Fiend would normally take half a year, but if I go...the total time of the trip, including bringing Alfonsus back, will be just three months.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel a surge of joy.

In the Four Divine Beasts clan, the White Tiger clan was that of a wind-type divine beast. In terms of speed, the White Tiger Patriarch was definitely the fastest expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan, and was far faster than most Seven Star Fiends.

“No need.” Gislason shook his head.

“Patriarch?” Linley said frantically.

Gislason laughed calmly. “Linley, don’t worry. I just used my divine sense to give the order to an intelligence agent of our Four Divine Beasts clan to inform the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture regarding your situation...and soon, we’ll have an answer.”

Linley was astonished. In fact, everyone in the hall was astonished.

The Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture was getting involved?

“Linley.” Phusro walked over, slapping Linley on the shoulders and laughing, “Don’t worry. The forces of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture are spread throughout the entire Indigo Prefecture. If he were to reach out to Alfonsus, it would be done very quickly! And perhaps the Lord Prefect even knows some other experts who can save Delia.”

Linley’s eyes couldn’t help but to light up.

The Lord Prefect, as the lord of Indigo Prefecture, had a level of influence in Indigo Prefecture that vastly surpassed the Four Divine Beasts clan. It must be understood that even the eight great clans dared not invade the Skyrite Mountains, all because of the Lord Prefect.

One could imagine how powerful the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture was.

“Will the Lord Prefect be willing to help me?” Linley was rather nervous as well. After all, he was neither friend nor family to this person.

“Don’t be impatient. Wait a while. Our intelligence agents will soon send an answer.” Gislason laughed, and Linley nodded. All he could do was swallow his impatience, burying it in his heart as he quietly waited.

Moments later...

“We have a response.” Gislason’s smile became brilliant. Clearly, the intelligence agent had communicated with him through divine sense.

Everyone in the main hall immediately looked towards Gislason.

“Haha, good news, Linley! The Lord Prefect has spoken.” Gislason laughed as he looked towards Linley, extremely happy. “Alfonsus is one of his friends, and in two or three days, his subordinates will reach and notify Alfonsus, who should be able to arrive here within three months.”

Linley felt relieved.

“Not just that!” Gislason laughed. “The Lord Prefect himself will come over as well. He says he will personally help treat Delia.”

“Elder Brother, the Lord Prefect is capable of treating the soul?” The Grand Elder asked, rather astonished. “I thought the Lord Prefect isn’t very specialized with regards to treating the soul.” The Grand elder and the others clearly remembered the scene, that year, of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture intervening and stopping the eight great clans.

That could be described as utterly terrifying!

Precisely because of that event, even figures as exalted as Gislason would respectfully address him as ‘Lord Prefect’. After all, if it weren’t for the Lord Prefect, their Four Divine Beasts clan would most likely have been annihilated.

“Haha, I’m rather surprised as well. However, since the Lord Prefect has already spoken, he definitely won’t fail to live up to his word!” Gislason laughed as he looked towards Linley. “Linley, now both Alfonsus and the Lord Prefect will come, one after the other. Don’t worry.”

“I truly didn’t expect that the Lord Prefect would be so incredible with respect to treating the soul as well!” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan sighed in amazement as well.

Linley felt a surge of excitement in his heart.

“Thank you, thank you all.” Linley looked at everyone and spoke solemnly. “Since it will be a long time before Mr. Alfonsus comes, I’ll go back for now.”

“Alright.” Gislason nodded and laughed. “Linley, go back and get some rest. Don’t worry too much. With the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture himself intervening, given his ability and influence, he can easily invite quite a few people to come. Delia will definitely be successfully saved.”

Linley forced out a smile and nodded.

And then, he let the earth-type divine power swell from his body, which naturally formed a soft, cloud-like floating ‘bed’ which Linley placed Wade upon. And then, he took Delia into his arms, nodding towards the Elders, and flew out of the main hall.

“Alright. Everyone can go back now.” Gislason said clearly.

The Four Divine Beast clan’s Elders all bade farewell, and then flew away in small groups. Moments later, the only ones remaining in the main hall were Gislason and Phusro. The two looked at each other.

Gislason immediately set up his ‘Godrealm’, separating the sound within from the outside world, then said urgently, “Phusro, last time we were discussing...”

Linley returned to that gorge within the Skyrise Mountains. He spent every day either by Delia’s side or taking care of Wade. But of course, Linley would occasionally let some of the other members of the Yulan branch take care of Wade.

A thin fog billowed about. Baruch was currently standing in an empty spot of land, staring towards Linley’s distant abode.

“Father.” Ryan walked over. “Are you worried about Delia and Linley?”

Baruch let out a sigh. “Right. Linley has already been back for half a month, but during this past half month, he’s never dined with us. He’s always remained within the room, hiding inside. In his eyes, the only person he can see right now, aside from Delia, is probably his son.”

“Linley’s sunken in too deeply.” Ryan frowned.

“Love...is very complicated. It’s something which is hard to explain.” Baruch shook his head.

Right at this moment, a figure descended from the skies at high speed. “Clan leader Baruch, how is my Boss doing?” The newcomer was Bebe. Bebe’s group had arrived after Linley.

“Bebe?” A hint of a smile appeared on Baruch’s face. “It’s good that you’ve returned. Go speak with Linley. Even if you aren’t able to persuade him to come out, if you can chat with him, perhaps Linley’s mood will improve.”

“Right.” Bebe nodded, then immediately ran over towards Linley’s residence.

Gislason’s residence. The main hall.

“Patriarch, nearly a hundred of our clansmen are unconscious. What should we do?” Tewila said frantically. “So many of our clansmen are sobbing!” Tewila’s return had resulted in the return of a large group of unconscious clansmen as well.

Gislason, frustrated, frowned as well.

“Enough of this subject.” Gislason ground out. “I know their situation well. They are just like Linley’s wife. We aren’t even able to save Linley’s wife; how are we going to save anyone else?”

Tewila’s face was full of worry as well.

“Let the clansmen make their preparations.” Gislason said. “Fortunately, most of our clansmen have divine clones. But Linley’s wife became a Deity through fusing with a divine spark. She doesn’t even have a clone. If she dies, she’ll truly be finished!”

Tewila nodded, letting out a sigh.

He had personally watched as Delia was hit by the technique and saw how Linley had reacted. “Most likely, in Linley’s mind right now, his wife’s life is more important than even his own. His wife is unfortunate as well, to have become a Deity through fusing with a divine spark!”

“Tewila.” Gislason instructed. “These unconscious clansmen...you go make the arrangements. Most likely...some of them fused with divine sparks as well.”

“Yes, Patriarch. I’ll make all the arrangements.” Tewila said.

“Fine. You can go now.” Gislason said.

After Tewila left, Gislason’s face became filled with exhaustion. To him, the matter of Delia and the other clansmen being unconscious was still a minor matter. What truly had him frustrated was the news which Phusro had brought him.

“Can it be...that there really is no hope?” Gislason raised his head, closing his eyes. A glimmer of tears flashed from between his eyelashes, like a gleaming, brilliant little jewel.

Gislason took a deep breath. The exhaustion disappeared from his face, and that resolute self-confidence once more appeared.

“Now...”

Gislason’s eyes were hard and firm. “All we can do is entrust our hopes to the Redbud Sovereign who stands behind Linley, as well as the Bloodridge Sovereign who stands behind the Lord Prefect. Unfortunately, the Lord Prefect isn’t willing to go all out for our clan’s sake. Otherwise...”

In the blink of an eye, three months passed.

“Why isn’t he here yet?” Linley stood outside his room, his head raised towards the skies. Ever since the three month mark approached, he had been watching the skies every single day, hoping that Alfonsus would descend into the gorge.

However, there had been no news of Alfonsus.

Bebe walked out from behind, looking at Linley’s back. Bebe felt miserable for Linley as well. He spoke. “Boss, don’t worry. He said three months, but that was just an estimate. It won’t be exactly three months, but it shouldn’t be too far off either. Most likely, Alfonsus will be here tomorrow.”

Linley turned to look at Bebe and nodded slightly. “Right. He’ll definitely arrive tomorrow.”

“Linley! Linley!” A frantic cry rang out from the air.

Linley seemed to have been struck by lightning, and he immediately turned to look towards the skies, only to see a figure descending at high speed while saying excitedly, “Linley, Mr. Alfonsus has arrived. He’s arrived!!!”

“Arrived?” After having waited so long, Linley’s heart seemed to have suddenly been set ablaze. All the hairs on his body stiffened, as though he had been hit by electricity.

The newcomer was Elder Garvey.

“The Patriarch told me to notify you. Hurry and make your preparations. He is currently accompanying Mr. Alfonsus, and they will arrive soon.” Elder Garvey’s face was filled with delight. “Linley, your wife will be saved.”

A look of joy was on Linley’s face as well.

“Right. Delia will be saved.” Linley turned and rushed into his room.

Delia was quietly lying on a bed in the room, as though she were asleep. By Delia’s side, there was a smaller bed, where Wade was quietly slumbering as well. Fortunately, by the time they had left Meer City, Wade was already able to eat liquid foods.

“Delia, Alfonsus is here. You’ll definitely recover.” Linley said softly.

“Boss, they’re here!” Bebe’s voice rang out from outside.

Linley hurriedly ran out, looking towards the skies. He saw that within the mist, more than ten blurry figures were flying over at high speed, and they soon landed on the ground. It was Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, Kestrel, and a group of Elders.

There were two non-Elders; one was Phusro, while the other was a silver-haired old man with a ruddy complexion and with skin as tender as an infant’s.

“He must be Alfonsus.” Linley’s eyes lit up.

“Linley, this person is Mr. Alfonsus.” Gislason laughed, and the silver-haired, baby-faced old man laughed as well, nodding towards Linley. “You are Linley, right? And your wife?”

Only now did Linley come to his senses, and he hurriedly said, “Mr. Alfonsus, please follow me.” He immediately led them in.

The group entered the room.

“Mr. Alfonsus.” Linley pointed towards his wife. “Please help save my wife!”

“I will try.” Alfonsus smiled. He walked to the bed, standing there for a moment as he used his divine sense to investigate. His expression gradually grew solemn. This caused Linley’s heart to clench. And then, Alfonsus reached out with his right hand, pressing it against the top of Delia’s head.

A blurry green l flowed out from Alfonsus’ hand, encapsulating Delia’s head.

Immediately, the entire room fell completely silent, with no one daring to make a sound. Linley held his breath as well as he watched this scene. “Since Alfonsus is acting, he definitely must have confidence in his ability to succeed.”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 50, Between Life and Death!

Within the room, everyone was watching Alfonsus treat Delia. Linley was the most nervous of them all, and his forehead became matted with sweat. Linley, however, didn't even notice.

“Crackle...”

That green energy circulated, emanating a very faint sound. Alfonsus, his face solemn, suddenly let out a low growl, and the speed at which the green light circulated suddenly increased dramatically, constantly pouring into Delia's brain.

“Uhhh...” Delia, seemingly in pain, let out a soft sound, and her forehead creased slightly.

This soft sound, to Linley, was like a clap of thunder. His eyes lit up as though he had been hit by lightning. “Delia has regained consciousness! She's responding!” Linley was so excited, his entire body was trembling.

Looks of joy had appeared on everyone else's faces as well.

“Boss, Delia is going to be saved.” Bebe hurriedly said through divine sense with joy as well.

“Right.” Linley nodded. He felt as though he were filled with life and energy.

Gislason, Phusro, and the others began to chortle as well. Linley continued to stare at Alfonsus as the man treated Delia, and the hope in his heart continued to swell. “Delia, you absolutely must get better, you must.”

Right at this moment...

Alfonsus took back his right hand, concluding the treatment.

“Mr. Alfonsus, is my wife treated?” Linley asked hurriedly. Alfonsus turned to look at Linley. He could clearly see the hopes and expectations held within the eyes of this youth. However, Alfonsus just let out a soft sigh. “Linley...make your preparations.”

“Preparations for what? What preparations?” Linley immediately had a bad feeling.

“Mr. Alfonsus, what is going on?” Gislason, whose face had been all smiles, hurriedly asked as his face changed as well.

Alfonsus shook his head. “All I can do is tell you quite openly...I am not able to save this woman. In addition, I recommend that you give up. To save this woman is virtually impossible.”

Hearing these words from Alfonsus, Linley felt his entire mind go blank.

“No!”

Linley suddenly growled, staring fixedly at Alfonsus, like a savage, maddened lion. “Mr. Alfonsus, you must be lying to me. Just now, Delia had a reaction. She was conscious. How can you suddenly said that you can't treat her?”

“Right. Didn’t she improve just now?” Gislason said as well.

Seeing the savage, wild look on the face of the youth in front of him, Alfonsus let out a low sigh. “Linley, just now, your wife didn’t actually regain consciousness. Rather, while I was treating her, her soul pushed at mine strongly, causing a slight involuntary response in her body.”

“But...but didn’t Kestrel say that you had a 90% chance of saving my wife? How can...now...” Linley couldn’t accept this.

He truly couldn’t accept it!

Three months ago, Linley had been convinced that Delia would definitely be cured. Over the past three months, Linley had been waiting constantly for this day. Just now, Linley had believed that Delia had already been cured.

But now...

Alfonsus let out a sigh. “Three months ago, if I were to treat your wife, I would definitely have been able to save her. But now, it’s too late.”

“What do you mean? You could save her three months ago, but not now?” Linley said frantically.

Alfonsus looked around at everyone, then said, “Everyone, this sort of spiritual attack is a very insidious, vile type. Those green spots of light invade the soul, then constantly devour and transform it. One spot becomes two, two becomes four, four becomes eight...”

“Although the souls of Highgods are powerful, and to devour and transform them is very difficult...as the multiplicative effects continue, the more time passes, the more extravagant the rate of devouring becomes.” Alfonsus said solemnly.

Everyone present nodded.

“I know these things. But why are you unable to save Delia?” Linley said frantically.

Alfonsus looked at Linley, then sighed. “Linley, you still don’t understand? The devouring and transforming speed continues to grow faster and faster. Three months ago, the speed of devouring and transforming...was a million times slower than it is now!”

Linley was stunned.

One becomes two, two becomes four, four becomes eight...as time went on, after a just a few dozen rounds, the numbers would become astronomically large.

“What I need to do in order to save your wife is to counter-devour and counter-transform those green spots of light!” Alfonsus said.

Linley knew this as well; that the treatment method was to counter-devour and reverse the transformation process.

“Only when my counter-devouring speed surpasses the devouring speed will I be able to save your wife.” Alfonsus said, and Linley completely understood.

“Right now, my treatment speed is far too slow, compared to the devouring speed. Even if I go all out, at most I’ll be able to slow the devouring speed and slightly extend your wife’s life.” Alfonsus sighed. “Three months ago, I could have easily saved your wife. But now...forgive my inability.”

Linley stood there, stunned.

He completely understood. This sort of devouring speed was like a spark of flame that had become a prairie fire. The more time passed, the wider the burned area would become. A single spark of fire was enough to char the entire grassland. The same was true for these green spots of light.

The more time passed, the faster the devouring speed...and the more distant the hopes for saving Delia would be.

“Boss. Boss.” Bebe called out repeatedly.

“Linley.” Phusro called out as well.

But Linley stood there like an idiot, completely silent.

“Alas.” Alfonsus let out a sigh as well.

Within the room, Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Patriarch, and the various Elders all looked at each other, speechless. The entire atmosphere was extremely tense and gloomy.

“Mr. Alfonsus.” Linley suddenly said frantically. “I beg of you, please help treat my wife and extend her life. Let me have enough time to ask someone else to help treat her. Is that acceptable?” Linley looked hopefully towards Alfonsus.

Linley understood that Alfonsus’ treatment speed was inferior to the devouring speed. Then...if Alfonsus wanted to extend Delia’s life, he would have to constantly treat her. This request of his was indeed rather excessive.

But...he had no choice!

“Linley.”

Alfonsus said solemnly. “Both because of your Four Divine Beasts clan as well as because of the Lord Prefect, I would definitely help extend your wife’s life if I had the ability to. But...I have to tell you. Even if I help out, I’ll at most be able to extend her life for a day or two.”

“A day or two?” Linley was stunned.

He had been hoping the extension would be for several years. The longer the better.

“This sort of soul treatment...it isn’t as simple as you think it is. To treat your wife...as I just said, because your wife’s soul rejected my energy, even her body physically reacted.” Alfonsus continued, “The soul is a very central part of a person. When treating someone, I have to be extremely, extremely careful. If just the slightest bit of energy spills out, I’ll have injured your wife’s soul and she will die.”

“I can maintain this sort of peak performance for a short period of time, ensuring that I don’t make any mistakes. But if the amount of time I spend in that state is just a bit too long, given how much spiritual energy that takes up, errors will naturally occur. And once an error occurs, your wife will...” Alfonsus said apologetically.

Linley was silent for a moment.

“Linley. The Lord Prefect will soon arrive. Perhaps the Lord Prefect will be able to save your wife.” Gislason said hurriedly.

Linley's eyes lit up. "Right. There's still the Lord Prefect."

But Alfonsus said, "Linley, I already told you to make your preparations. Although I deeply admire the Lord Prefect, to be honest...I don't believe that the Lord Prefect has the ability to heal her."

"Mr. Alfonsus!" Linley was growing angry.

"To save your wife, there are only three methods." Alfonsus said.

Linley immediately started to listen attentively.

"The first is to have an expert who has trained to the utmost limits of the Edicts of Life come. Most likely, his treatment speed will be able to surpass the devouring speed. A person like this will be able to save your wife...but of course, you must understand that if three more months pass and the process reaches the late stages, most likely even the most powerful expert of the Edicts of Life will be unable to rescue her."

Alfonsus said. "However, this type of person, who has trained to the utmost limits of the Edicts of Life, is extremely rare even in the Higher Plane of Life, much less in the Infernal Realm. The second method is to use Life-type Sovereign's Might. Devouring speed at this level, considering how powerful Life-type Sovereign's Might is, can be quickly cured!"

Gislason said frantically, "Our Four Divine Beasts clan does have Life-type Sovereign's Might!"

"Right, we have Life-type Sovereign's Might!" Linley said hurriedly as well.

"You didn't let me finish!"

Alfonsus shook his head. "Life-type Sovereign's Might is extremely powerful. Naturally, its restorative speed is astonishing. But...Life-type Sovereign's Might is in fact TOO powerful. There is no way a Highgod can control it perfectly. I imagine that those of you who have used Sovereign's Might know that it will leak out, right?"

Linley was stunned.

Right...

Sovereign's Might was too powerful. The spiritual strength which a Highgod could exert over it was not enough to perfectly control it. This would cause the user of Sovereign's Might to emanate an azure aura or a black aura or some other aura over their body.

This was caused by the natural leakage of Sovereign's Might.

It was said that Sovereign's Might could only be used a single time! This was because once a Highgod used Sovereign's Might, there was no way the Highgod would be able to prevent the Sovereign's Might from leaking out and dissipating. Even if he stopped fighting, the Sovereign's Might would still naturally disperse.

"Even if I used Sovereign's Might to save Delia by delving deep into her soul...if there was the slightest bit of imprecision, Delia's soul would be impacted and would die. To say nothing of the leakage of energy from the Sovereign's Might!" Alfonsus said. "Remember, to save Delia, there can't be a single hint of leakage of Sovereign's Might, or a single mistake!"

Linley's face couldn't help but turn ashen.

He understood this principle. Sovereign's Might was the energy of a Sovereign. He had never heard of a Highgod who could control it perfectly, to the point where not a hint was wasted or dispersed.

Gislason said, “There are indeed Highgods who are capable of controlling Sovereign’s Might so perfectly...according to legend, Highgods who have reached the Paragon level are able to perfectly control Sovereign’s Might. Unfortunately, I’ve never heard of a Highgod Paragon who resides within Indigo Prefecture.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh bitterly.

“Mr. Alfonsus, didn’t you say there was a third method?” Linley immediately asked.

Alfonsus said resignedly, “The third method is to ask a Sovereign to intervene! If a Sovereign is willing to intervene, no matter which Sovereign! Your wife would be easily saved. But...will you be able to convince a Sovereign to help?”

“Your third method is a waste of words.” Bebe said unhappily.

But Linley was silent for a long time.

“Mr. Alfonsus, are there truly no other methods?” Linley asked again.

Alfonsus nodded with absolute certainty. “Given my understanding of the soul, I daresay that I am completely certain that aside from these three methods, there are no other methods available.”

The first method was to find an expert who had reached the utmost limits of insight into the Edicts of Life, a supreme expert who vastly surpassed Alfonsus. But where in Indigo Prefecture would they go to find someone like that?

The second method was to find someone who was able to perfectly control Sovereign’s Might, without allowing for any leakage or making any errors. This amount of spiritual control was something which only those legendary Paragons were capable of.

The third method...

The only Sovereign which Linley had a connection to was the Redbud Sovereign. But even aside from the question of whether or not she would help out, the amount of time it would take to go from the Bloodridge Continent to the Redbud Continent was far, far too long!

Delia couldn’t wait for that long!

“Everyone...I’ve troubled you all in recent days.” Linley forced out a smile. “You can all go back now. There’s no need to worry yourselves over my affairs. Mr. Alfonsus, I wish to truly thank you for having hurried such a distance to come save my wife.”

Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, Phusro, and the others, seeing the look on Linley’s face, all sighed in their hearts.

“Linley, we’ll leave for now.” Gislason and the others wanted to console him, but they didn’t know what to say. All of them simply left.

Although they all knew that the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture would arrive soon, after hearing Alfonsus’ explanations, they all understood...that the Lord Prefect probably wouldn’t be able to save Delia, unless his spiritual control was able to perfectly control Sovereign’s Might. But unfortunately, according to legends, only Highgod Paragons were capable of this.

“Boss...”

Bebe looked at Linley's forlorn figure. He had the sudden urge to cry.

Linley turned to look at Bebe, forcing a smile out. "Bebe, you head out as well. Let me accompany Delia by myself." Linley patted Bebe on the shoulders. Bebe made a sound in acknowledgment, nodding repeatedly.

And then, Bebe left the room as well.

Within the room, the only figures now present were Linley, Delia, and that slumbering Wade, who had no idea what was going on.

Linley quietly looked at Delia, countless scenes flashing through his mind. Grief filled his breast, and he couldn't help but raise his head. "Heavens! Why must you punish me so!!!"

His hoarse voice echoed and reverberated within the silent room. It was filled with regret, anger, grief...and despair!

Two streams of tears fell down from Linley's face.

Linley slowly walked to the bed, kneeling in front of it and looking carefully at Delia. He stretched his hand out, gently stroking Delia's face. A hint of a smile appeared on Linley's face as well, a peaceful smile. "Delia, I'll accompany you on the final leg of the journey. Never to part...ever!"

Time flowed on. In the blink of an eye, many days had passed.

Bebe stood outside the room, staring in from outside the window. At this moment, Baruch walked past. Afraid of disturbing Linley, he said softly, "Bebe, how is Linley doing right now?" Everyone knew Delia's situation, and they all understood...

That there was most likely no hope for Delia. Only, everyone feared that because of this, Linley would collapse and perhaps even do something which would cause everyone regret and pain.

"See for yourself." Bebe sighed. There wasn't a hint of a smile on Bebe's face right now. He didn't have any mood to laugh or joke around any longer.

Baruch looked in through the window.

He saw, within the room...

Linley was currently holding Wade, feeding Wade some liquid food. Every so often, Linley would look towards Delia and say softly, "Delia, Wade's been very good today. He hasn't caused any fuss at all."

Seeing this from outside the window, Baruch couldn't bear to watch any longer.

"I really hope!" Bebe said softly. "I really, truly hope, that Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture who is arriving soon will be able to save Delia! He has to!"

"Right." Baruch nodded as well.

Right at this moment, a figure suddenly descended from the skies. It was Phusro. Phusro said in a soft voice as well, "Bebe, Linley, he..."

"Phusro, you came?" A gentle voice rang out. Smiling, Linley walked out of the room, carrying Wade. "I came to take Wade out for a walk. Come, Phusro, you can hold Wade for a while as well. It's been so long since you last came. Wade has missed you."

Phusro, seeing the smile on Linley's face, couldn't help but feel stunned.

He hadn't expected that at a time like this, Linley would be smiling? But for some reason, he had this feeling...that Linley's smile caused him to feel even more miserable than a look of grief.

"Alright, I'll hold him..." Phusro immediately walked over.

"Hug..." Wade, seeing Phusro walked over, immediately reached out with his little hand while saying, "Hug...hug..."

Linley laughed. "Wade can say a few simple words already. He knows how to say 'mother'."

Right at this moment...

A figure descended from the skies at high speed. It was Elder Garvey. Elder Garvey flew over, hurriedly saying, "Linley, the Lord Prefect has arrived!"

Linley was stunned.

"The Lord Prefect came?" A hint of color appeared in Linley's lifeless eyes. Although Linley no longer held much hope in the ability of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture to save Delia, at least it was worth a try.

"Right. The four clan leaders and the Grand Elder immediately went to greet him. It'll be a while before he arrives!" Elder Garvey explained.

The four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan were naturally very arrogant, but they sincerely admired the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, admired and respected him. The great kindness this person had shown to their clan, as well as this person's power, was more than enough for them to act this way towards him.

"Oh, Linley lives right here?" A friendly voice rang out.

Ten figures descended from the skies. Linley, Phusro, Bebe, and the others all raised their heads to look. The person flying at the head was the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, while Gislason and the four clan leaders followed by his side, their attitudes very humble and meek.

But Linley just stared fixedly at that figure who was escorted by those four clan leaders, like the moon surrounded by four stars.

The person was dressed in a long black robe. His long black hair fluttered in the breeze, and his long black beard hung down to his chest. His eyes were very small, but they looked as lively and energetic as the stars. A hint of a smile was at the corner of his lips, and a very friendly look was on his face.

"Linley!" That person laughed while greeting him.

"Linley, this is the Lord Prefect." Gislason introduced.

But Linley just stared in disbelief. "Be...Lord Beirut?!"

"Grandpa!" Bebe called out as well, shocked. He excitedly charged forward, and Beirut opened his mouth and laughed loudly. "Haha, Bebe..." And as he spoke, he drew Bebe into his arms.

"Grandpa!" Bebe called out excitedly once again.

"Haha...you've missed Grandpa, eh?" Beirut laughed very happily.

As for Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, and the rest of the four clan leaders, as well as the Grand Elder and the other Elders, and even Phusro...they all stared with wide eyes in disbelief at this scene.

“The Lord Prefect? ‘Grandpa’?”

Looks of utmost amazement were on the faces of Gislason and the others.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 51,

Beirut's Abilities

Linley had originally sunk into despair. He believed that Delia had no hope for life, and he didn't place much hope into the arrival of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture. But he had never imagined that the person who had saved the Four Divine Beasts clan from the flames and the floods, the Lord Prefect whom Gislason constantly praised as unspeakably powerful, was actually Bebe's grandfather...Beirut!

When he saw Beirut, Linley couldn't help but feel hope surge within his breast.

Beirut, in Linley's mind, was unfathomably profound and powerful.

"Perhaps Lord Beirut truly will be able to save Delia." Linley, in his heart, began to feel rather eager.

Outside the door of the room, a large group of people stared in astonishment at Bebe and the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, Beirut, and at how close they appeared. They had no idea...that this unremarkable youth who had always been by Linley's side had actually had such a close relationship with the Lord Prefect!

"Beirut...you are his grandfather?" Phusro spoke out in amazement.

Grinning, Beirut glanced at him sideways, then nodded slightly. "Phusro, I truly do apologize. I lied to you previously. I was afraid that if you knew the real relationship between myself and Bebe, that you would go out of your way to take care of this little fellow...you have no idea how lazy a temperament this Bebe has. He absolutely has to be made to learn to take care of himself."

Phusro began to laugh as well.

When he had been just a little kitten in Elquin's arms, that first time he had met Linley and Bebe, he had guessed that Bebe had some sort of relationship with Beirut, especially after seeing Bebe use that godspark weapon.

Afterwards, when he had met Beirut, he had asked Beirut about this. But Beirut just gave a casual answer and had thus deceived him.

"Haha, yes, this little fellow does need a bit of forging in the crucible of life." Phusro laughed, looking at Bebe.

Bebe couldn't help but let out a snort. "Grandpa, I already have mastered five profound mysteries. It has only been a thousand years. My speed is already quite fast."

"How can you be so shameless!" Beirut didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Of the five profound mysteries which Bebe had mastered, one came naturally from when he, as a divine beast, reached the age of maturity. As for the other four, they came from those soul slice fragments which Beirut had asked his friend to create.

But of course...

Bebe's comprehension ability wasn't bad, as he was able to break through four bottlenecks in a row.

Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, the other clan leaders, and the Elders were all completely stunned. They truly had not imagined that Linley and Bebe actually had such a deep relationship with this unfathomably powerful Lord Prefect.

“Lord Prefect, Bebe is already quite impressive to have mastered five profound mysteries in a thousand or so years.” Gislason said as well.

“You don’t know the truth of the secrets within.” Beirut said, his eyes half-lidded in amusement.

“Grandpa!” Bebe was rather unhappy.

Beirut chortled, “However, compared to the Yulan continent, you have indeed made great improvements. At least your patience has improved a bit...haha...”

Only now did Bebe smile as well.

“Lord Beirut.” Linley finally spoke. “My wife, Delia, she...”

Beirut turned to look. Seeing Linley, his expression grew slightly more solemn. He nodded. “I heard of your wife’s situation, which is why I hurried over. Back then, when the two of you were getting married, I even sent my son with a divine spark to your wife. Who would have imagined...that this would happen. Alas. Come, let me take a look.”

“Right.” Linley immediately led the way forward, and the two stepped into the room, with Phusro and Bebe following behind.

In the past, Beirut had given her a divine spark out of good intentions. After all, the chances of becoming a Deity on one’s own in a material plane were extremely low. Although there were many benefits to becoming a Deity on one’s own...Delia, become a Deity without assistance? Forget about becoming a Deity; even becoming a Saint would be difficult. Who knew how long it would take for her to become a Deity?

The same was true for Wharton.

If Wharton didn’t undergo the Ancestral Baptism, it would also be very hard for him to become a Deity by relying on his own abilities.

“Linley actually has such a relationship with the Lord Prefect.” Gislason and the others were all outside the room, looking at each other. They were still stunned by this news. At the same time, Gislason set up his Godrealm, blocking out sound and not letting those inside the room listen to them.

“Didn’t you hear? When Linley got married in a material plane, the Lord Prefect even sent him gifts. Their relationship is an extremely close one.” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch’s lips crooked upwards in a smile, and she began to laugh. “To our Four Divine Beasts clan, this is a good thing as well.”

“Right. If the Lord Prefect truly decides to help us, the eight great clans won’t dare to be so arrogant!” The Black Tortoise Patriarch nodded as well.

“The abilities of the Lord Prefect truly are frightening.” Gislason sighed in amazement as well.

They all remembered that scene, from when Beirut had appeared to stop those eight great clans. He had wielded that long black staff in his hands, and moved like lightning as he roamed about in the midst of the many experts of the eight great clans. Not a single Seven Star Fiend who was touched by that staff had any chance at survival.

However, the experts of the eight great clans weren't able to harm Beirut in the slightest with their material attacks, and when their spiritual attacks landed on Beirut, there was apparently no effect at all.

In the blink of an eye, Beirut had laid waste to and slaughtered more than twenty Seven Star Fiends, terrifying the forces of the eight great clans so badly that they had immediately paused their attacks. Even when Patriarch Boleyn of the eight great clans had exchanged a blow with Beirut, he had been heavily injured, even though he hadn't died.

It must be understood that Patriarch Boleyn also had a Sovereign artifact. But when compared to Beirut...

They were on different levels!

Beirut was reputed to be the most powerful figure in the Bloodridge Continent, aside from the Bloodridge Sovereign himself! Not only did he have such a reputation; nobody even dared to question it. The other Asuras all tacitly accepted it. From this, one could tell how powerful he was.

"Back then, if the Lord Prefect had forcibly demanded the eight great clans to all f*ck off, even though they wouldn't have been willing to do so, in the end, they still probably would have." Gislason sighed. "However, it seems as though the Lord Prefect doesn't want to offend the eight great clans too much. Most likely, he wants to give face to the Sovereigns behind the eight great clans. Thus, he just forbade the eight great clans from entering the Skyrise Mountains."

"It already is very good for the Lord Prefect to be willing to do this for us." The Vermillion Bird Matriarch said with a solemn look on her face. "Back in the day, when the four ancestors were all present, how many experts had aligned themselves with our clan? Our four ancestors had quite a few Sovereign's Emissaries as well. But after the four ancestors died? Not a single one of those Emissaries cared about our clans."

The other Elders all sighed quietly.

Indeed. As the saying went, 'When the people are gone, the tea grows cold!'

Once the ancestors died, even their Emissaries simply watched, not assisting at all as the Four Divine Beasts clan tottered step by step towards annihilation. But fortunately, the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture had finally intervened. Although he hadn't completely shooed away the eight great clans, at least he had allowed the Four Divine Beasts clan to survive and not be annihilated.

A person couldn't be too greedy.

The Lord Prefect had already been very benevolent towards them. The Lord Prefect had done so much for them, but the Four Divine Beasts clan had been unable to do anything to repay him.

"Let's go. We'll go in and take a look." Gislason was the first to walk in, and the various Elders all followed him.

As soon as Gislason entered the room, he saw that Linley was standing there to the side, waiting quietly. As for Beirut, he was standing with his eyes closed. Moments later, his eyes opened and he let out a sigh. "Delia's situation is even more terrible than I expected!"

"Lord Beirut, can it be that even you are unable to save Delia?" Linley said frantically.

"Grandpa." Bebe said hurriedly as well.

"Haha..." Beirut began to laugh loudly. "I only said the situation is terrible. I didn't say I'm unable to save her! However, in order to save your wife, I'm going to have to waste a drop of Life-type Sovereign's Might!"

As he spoke, Beirut extended his palm, and a green drop of liquid appeared within it.

“Lord Beirut.” As soon as Linley saw this drop of Life-type Sovereign’s Might, he was worried. “In treating the soul, one has to delve deep into the core of the soul. If there’s even a hint of energy leakage from the Sovereign’s Might or a single error, then...”

Although Linley wanted to save Delia, he didn’t want to watch as Delia died due to an accident.

“Lord Prefect, using a drop of Sovereign’s Might...” Gislason interjected as well.

“Hey, do you think that I actually don’t have common sense?” Puzzled, Beirut turned to look towards Linley and the others. “It’s just a drop of Life-type Sovereign’s Might. Although it is indeed hard to use a drop of it without letting any leak out, who says I’m not capable of it?”

As Beirut spoke, the drop of Life-type Sovereign’s Might in his hand entered his body.

And then, Beirut pointed out with a finger from his right hand, and a green blurry illusion formed.

“Sovereign’s Might!” Linley was stunned.

“How is that possible?” Gislason, Phusro, and the others were all stunned. Beirut had clearly already used his Sovereign’s Might, but Beirut’s body wasn’t emanating a hint of it at all.

Normally speaking, after a person used Sovereign’s Might, a colored aura would emanate from that person’s body.

That light was the leaking Sovereign’s Might. But Beirut didn’t leak out any at all. From the outside, one wouldn’t be able to tell at all...that Beirut was using Sovereign’s Might.

Linley was overjoyed. “She’ll be saved. Delia will be saved. I didn’t expect Lord Beirut to be so formidable. He’s able to wield even the heavy power of Sovereign’s Might with precision, not letting a hint leak out.”

Sovereign’s Might was simply too overpoweringly strong for Highgods.

Using it was like letting an ordinary mortal wield a heavy sword that weighed fifty kilograms. Due to its great weight, it would be hard for the mortal to wield it accurately, agilely, and without any errors.

The same was true for a Deity who used Sovereign’s Might.

It exceeded the bounds of control of their spiritual energy, and thus it would leak out. According to legend, only Paragon Highgods were able to perfectly control Sovereign’s Might. But today, Beirut had accomplished it.

“Lord Prefect, can it be that you have already reached the Paragon...” Gislason said in shock.

“Quiet!”

Beirut frowned, his face growing solemn. “While I am treating Delia, none of you are permitted to speak. If you disturb me, then you will bear the consequences!” Beirut, for once, decided to show his fierce side.

Immediately, everyone in the room fell silent.

Linley’s heart was pounding, and he watched everything nervously. He saw Beirut extend his right hand, clasp the top part of Delia’s head with it. Immediately, that blurry, illusory green light began to flood into Delia’s head.

As for Beirut, he closed his eyes, completely focused on healing her.

The entire room was completely silent. Not even breathing could be heard.

“She’ll definitely get better. She’ll definitely get better.” Linley stared unblinkingly as he prayed nonstop. He was truly afraid. Prior to this, when that Alfonsus had treated Delia, he had also acted in a similar manner. Linley had believed that Delia would get better, but the result had been...

Utter silence...

Time passed, one second at a time.

Healing the soul was a very detailed, careful project. The insides of a soul were extremely complex, and the innermost core of a soul was extremely fragile. The slightest error would cause the soul to be finished. Even Beirut had to be very careful and slow in his treatment.

After a long time...

The sweat which had poured out of Linley’s forehead had already dried.

“All done!” A long sigh shook the room. This sudden noise within the silent room caused Linley to feel shocked. He hurriedly looked towards Beirut. The moment of judgment had arrived!

“Lord Beirut, how is it?” When Linley said these words, his heart was trembling.

“How is it? Take a look for yourself.” Beirut laughed.

Linley immediately looked towards Delia, only to see the slumbering Delia’s eyelids tremble slightly. In that moment, Linley felt as though flames were scorching his chest, and a look of joy couldn’t help but appear on his face.

Delia opened her eyes, a lost, uncomprehending look within them. She looked around herself. There were so many people here.

“Lord Beirut.” Delia breathed in astonishment, then immediately looked at Linley. “Linley, what happened?” After Delia had been hit by the technique, she had lost all consciousness. She had no idea what had happened in the following period of time.

“Linley, why are you crying?” Delia felt completely baffled.

Why was it that as soon as she had woken up, there were so many people present, including the Patriarch. And even Beirut had appeared!

Tears uncontrollably fell down Linley’s face. The moment Delia woke up, Linley felt as though the world, which had turned dark, had suddenly regained its brightness. It had regained its color!

“Delia!” Linley embraced Delia, hugging her tightly, afraid that he might lose her again.

“Lord Prefect, you...you are a Paragon Highgod?” Gislason said.

“Beirut, you...” Phusro said in astonishment as well.

Beirut simply began to laugh loudly. “What are you people talking about? Can it be that if I’m not a Paragon Highgod, I won’t be able to control Sovereign’s Might?”

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Phusro, Gislason, and everyone else were momentarily speechless.

“Grandpa!”

At this moment, Bebe immediately spoke out, his face filled with delight. “I know why they are puzzled. It is because everyone says...that according to legend, only a Highgod who has become a Paragon is able to perfectly control Sovereign's Might.”

Beirut looked around at the people within the room.

“Legend...all of you know that is just a legend, right?” Beirut laughed calmly. “Paragon Highgods are able to do it, but does that necessarily mean that no other Highgods are able to do it? All of you are too rigid in your thinking!”

Legends were nothing more than legends, after all!

Reality wasn't necessarily the same as legends.

“Beirut...admirable, admirable. No wonder your almighty Sovereign values you so much.” Phusro laughed. Generally speaking, Emissaries were mere subordinates to their Sovereign. The death of a Sovereign's Emissary just meant that the Sovereign could go find another one.

But some Emissaries were exceedingly valued and held in high regard by their Sovereign.

For example, Highgod Paragons. Although Beirut wasn't a Highgod Paragon, his Sovereign still held him in extremely high regard.

“Forget about me; your Sovereign values you greatly as well.” Beirut laughed.

Phusro, hearing this, couldn't help but laugh as well. That fire-type Sovereign had personally competed against him, starting with material attacks and spiritual attacks and moving to other aspects. Only at the very end did the fire-type Sovereign reveal his identity. For a Sovereign to lower himself to spar with Phusro...naturally, he didn't view or treat Phusro as an ordinary chess piece.

As Phusro and Beirut chatted, the four Patriarchs and Elders just stood there and listened, not daring to interject. After all, the two were both Sovereign's Emissaries.

Beirut turned to glance at Linley, and then instructed Gislason and the others, “Enough. Everyone, no need to keep crowding the two of them in this room. Linley and his wife undoubtedly have quite a few private words they want to share with each other. You can go out for now.”

Only now did Gislason and the others come to their senses, and they hurriedly nodded.

“Lord Prefect, Linley's wife has been treated and cured thanks to your arrival. Tonight, our Four Divine Beasts clan will host a celebratory banquet for her cure and your arrival. What do you say?” Gislason said.

“Alright then. Tonight, you can send someone over. For now, I want to chat with Bebe for a time.” Beirut laughed as he looked at Bebe, rubbing Bebe’s head.

Bebe just cocked his head sideways, immediately dodging.

“Lord Prefect!” Suddenly, a clear voice rang out. “There’s something I want to beg of you, Lord Prefect.”

“Little Sis.” Gislason couldn’t help but hurriedly send through divine sense, “Let’s hurry up and leave.” Clearly, upon seeing that Beirut had already asked them to leave, it would be imprudent for them to stay.

Beirut couldn’t help but frown, dissatisfied. He turned to look, and he saw that the speaker was the Grand Elder of the Azure Dragon clan. The Grand Elder clan said solemnly, “Lord Prefect, this time, quite a few others aside from Linley’s wife had also fainted, and their situation is the same as hers! I wonder, Lord Prefect, if you would be willing to help...”

“Hmph!” Beirut let out a cold snort. His thick black eyebrows suddenly turned stiff, and his gaze turned cold as he looked at her.

“Little Sis!” Gislason barked as well.

“Laughable!”

Beirut’s gaze drilled down towards the Grand Elder. “Saving a person uses up Sovereign’s Might! Uses up my own energy! It is easy for you to say...and what’s more, what do the lives of your people have to do with me? By your line of reasoning...whenever anyone in the entire Infernal Realm is wounded or in danger, I, Beirut, should appear and rescue them!”

Seeing Beirut angered, the clan leaders and Elders of the Four Divine Beasts clan were shocked.

Good heavens. The only reason why their Four Divine Beasts clan was able to survive here within the Skyrite Mountains was all because of Beirut. If Beirut simply stopped helping them, the entire Four Divine Beasts clan, under the combined attacks of their enemies, would be finished.

Faced with Beirut’s anger, the Grand Elder didn’t dare to say another word either.

“Lord Prefect, I apologize. My little sister is just worried about her clansmen.” Gislason said apologetically, and then immediately led everyone away.

“Beirut, when you lost your temper, you frightened that female Elder so much, she didn’t dare say another word. Jeeze, Beirut. You could’ve just said no. Why lose your temper?” Phusro laughed. Beirut’s face returned to its normal, pleasant smiling expression as well.

“Phusro, there’s no need to receive outsiders like them with a smile at all times. Otherwise, some people will go farther and farther out of bounds.” Beirut said with a calm laugh

Beirut wasn’t the soft-hearted type. In the battles in the Yulan continent, no matter how many people died, Beirut hadn’t cared at all. As he saw it, life and death were both part of the laws of nature.

Each person would eventually die.

Deities would theoretically have an unlimited lifespan, true. But in the entire Infernal Realm, countless Deities were dying in battle each day. If they didn’t have a connection to him, why would he care about them and why would he intervene?

“Grandpa, let’s go back.” Bebe urged.

Beirut began to laugh. "Right. We're disturbing Linley and his wife."

"Lord Beirut, thank you, truly." Linley held Delia's hand as he spoke words of gratitude towards Beirut. Beirut had saved Delia this time, yet there was nothing Linley could do to repay this.

"Haha...." Beirut began to laugh. "Alright. I won't disturb you two, husband and wife, any further."

Beirut immediately led Phusro and Bebe away, and in the entire room, only Linley and Delia remained.

Within the room.

Linley began to slowly explained what had happened in recent days to Delia. Delia just sat there listening. Although Linley was very calm when speaking, Delia could sense from Linley's words how much terror and despair Linley had felt, as well as the excitement he had felt when hope had been birthed from despair.

"Delia, if Lord Beirut hadn't saved you this time...I really cannot even begin to imagine what the future would be like, after you died." Linley sighed emotionally. "Training? Training for what? Even if I become powerful, what's the point? Without you, no matter how powerful I am, what's the point?"

Delia's death, to Linley, would have caused his future to fade to utter black.

He wouldn't have any hopes!

He wouldn't have any motivation!

Hearing his words, Delia's eyes glistened with moistness. She immediately stretched her arms out, hugging Linley. She hurriedly said, "Linley, say no more. I'm already healed now. I'm fine!"

"Right. You are fine!"

Linley stroked Delia's face and nodded. "Delia, I have never been so excited, so happy, so energetic before! When I saw you open your eyes, when I saw the colors in your eyes...I felt as though my entire body was filled with life!"

"For your sake, for our child's sake, I will continue to strive hard to continuously improve myself, to become powerful!" Linley looked at Delia. "With you by my side, I fear nothing!"

The tears began to roll down Delia's face as she listened, but her face was covered with a smile of contentment and bliss.

"Delia!" Linley stretched his hand out, and a drop of water-type Sovereign's Might appeared. "This is water-type Sovereign's Might. This time, if I had given you a drop of Sovereign's Might early on, you wouldn't have been in any danger. Fortunately, you are fine now, but I don't want this sort of event to occur again. Take this drop of Sovereign's Might!"

"Linley, no..." Delia, upon seeing the Sovereign's Might, immediately refused.

"Take it!"

Linley said solemnly, "Delia, after this event, I now understand that there will be times when I cannot protect you. By holding a drop of Sovereign's Might, at a critical point in time, you will be able to preserve your own life. This Sovereign's Might is highly effective in both soul defense and material defense. Delia, don't refuse!"

Delia looked at Linley. She knew him very well and understood his temper.

“Fine. I’ll take it.” Delia didn’t refuse any further.

Only now did a smile appear again on Linley’s face. He stretched his arm out, pulling Delia closer, and she nestled into his embrace. “After having lost something, one values it all the more. I’ve tasted loss once. I don’t want to taste it again!”

“You won’t, you won’t.” A smile was on Delia’s face.

“Right.”

Linley said in acknowledgement. For a moment, both fell silent.

And just like that, the two leaned against each other, sensing each other’s breathing, enjoying that warmth, that peace...

That very night. The Skyrite Mountains. The four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan, a large group of Elders, and even many Elders who had lost their most powerful bodies were gathered together for a banquet. After all, the guest of honor this time was the savior of their Four Divine Beasts clan, the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture!

When they knew of the relationship between Beirut, Bebe, and Linley, all of them were shocked.

Exchanging toasts and celebrating joyously, everyone drank together happily.

“Elder Linley!” Gislason, seated on the throne at the front of the hall, said in a loud voice, “This time, you battled against eight Elders. Although you used up a drop of Sovereign’s Might, you also killed fully five of the enemy Seven Star Fiends.”

Linley couldn’t help but look towards him..

“I know that you specialize in the Laws of the Earth. This time, I had a meeting with the Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan. Killing five enemy Elders is a major accomplishment. The clan thus bestows upon you two drops of Sovereign’s Might; one drop of water-type Sovereign’s Might, and one drop of earth-type Sovereign’s Might.” Gislason laughed as he spoke.

“Linley, by using this earth-type Sovereign’s Might with your Gravitational Space technique, the power will be much greater.” A deep, rumbling voice rang out. It was the Black Tortoise Patriarch

Linley hurriedly stood up, moving to the center of the hall.

At the same time, Sovereign’s Might floated out from the hands of Gislason as well as the Black Tortoise Patriarch. One was a blue drop of water, while the other was an earthen yellow liquid. Linley immediately accepted them, storing them into his Coiling Dragon ring.

“Thank you, Patriarchs.” Linley bowed.

“After having rendered merits, one must be rewarded. This is the rule of the clan.” Gislason laughed.

“Alright. Take your seat again. Everyone, keep drinking.”

Phusro and Beirut, also seated in the front of the main hall, exchanged glances, then laughed.

Below them, however, the unassuming Elder Forhan felt unhappiness in his heart.

“Father.” Emanuel sent through divine sense.

This was a major celebratory event, and so many people had come. The clan still held in great esteem those warriors who had lost their most powerful divine clones in battle and who in terms of power were no longer worth of being called ‘Elders’. These people still had a fairly high status within the clan, and they were invited to attend this banquet as well. Emanuel was one of them.

“The Patriarch seems to be too biased.” Emanuel sent through divine sense. “According to the rules of the clan, if an Elder uses up a drop of Sovereign’s Might in battle, generally speaking, he’ll just receive another one in compensation. Even if the Elder rendered a significant amount of merit, at most he’ll just receive some words of praise. After all, the clan no longer has much Sovereign’s Might left.”

“Hmph.” Forhan replied through divine sense. “It’s all because of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture. Otherwise, how could they give Linley two drops of Sovereign’s Might? I really don’t know how Linley has such bullshit luck. He actually even has a relationship with the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture!”

Forhan was extremely unhappy.

Linley being in possession of the Azure Dragon ring was something which Forhan was already rather unhappy about. And now, it seemed as though Linley’s relationship with the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture was incredibly strong as well. Naturally, Forhan was smoldering. But although he was angry, he didn’t dare show it on his face.

On his face, he was still smiling. He even raised his glass in a toast. “Elder Linley, truest congratulations. Come, cheers!”

Linley was seated on the left seat of honor, fairly close to Beirut, who was seated in the front of the hall. Beirut looked towards Linley, then said through divine sense, “Linley, I heard that on the way back, you suffered a joint attack from eight enemy Elders?”

“Right.” Linley was puzzled by this as well. He sent back through divine sense, “This is indeed fishy. First of all, I changed my appearance. Second of all, as soon as I exited the city, they attacked en masse. And third, the enemy sent out eight Elders! They wouldn’t do that without complete certainty.”

Beirut was momentarily silent, then sent back through divine sense, “Phusro discussed this with me as well. I’ve carefully analyzed the situation, and I suspect...that someone within the clan probably leaked out your information.”

Linley was stunned.

“Linley, tell me, is there anyone you suspect?” Beirut sent mentally.

Linley naturally had someone he suspected.

“Lord Beirut, I have no proof at all. And there’s no way to be absolutely sure if there is even a traitor involved at all! Empty suspicions are useless to voice.” Linley sent.

“Don’t worry about if it is ‘useless’ or not. Just tell me, is there someone you suspect! Tell me who the person you suspect is!” Beirut said.

Linley hesitated, then said, “There is a person. That time, when I mounted on my metallic lifeform and left, he saw me leave as well. Within the clan, the only people I have a conflict with is him and his son.”

“Who is it?” Beirut asked.

“Forhan!” Linley finally said the name.

“Which one is he? Is he within the hall?” Beirut asked.

“Yes.” Linley replied. “He’s the fifth one on the row in front of us.”

Beirut followed Linley’s gesture. Turning his head, he saw that Forhan was currently exchanging toasts with another Elder while saying, “The clan’s situation is growing tougher and tougher. Last time, when I encountered an enemy Elder, I was nearly finished.”

“Oh, the one with gold hair?” Beirut sent back through divine sense and asked.

Linley replied, “That’s the one!”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 53,

Putting on a Performance

“What exactly is Lord Beirut going to do?” Linley was puzzled. Whether or not the clan had a traitor and whether or not Forhan was that traitor...there was no evidence for it. Why was Lord Beirut asking so many questions?

Just as Linley was puzzled, Beirut, seated at the front of the hall, suddenly slammed his cup against the long table in front of him. That ear-piercing sound couldn't help but cause the four clan leaders and Phusro to all look towards him.

“Hmph!” Beirut let out a cold snort.

Instantly, the entire main hall went silent. Everyone understood that this Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture seemed to be rather upset about something. It didn't matter if they offended others, but they couldn't offend this person who was supporting their clan. Gislason let out two chuckles, then said, “Lord Prefect, is something amiss?”

Beirut glanced sideways at him, and then looked at the surrounding people, his gaze clear and fierce.

“Linley's group was assaulted by eight enemy Elders. He killed several of them; he rendered merits, and so he was rewarded. I must praise your clan for the way you handled this part...but, can it be that your Four Divine Beasts clan isn't preparing to investigate how this matter of a simultaneous attack by eight Elders came about?!”

Beirut let out a cold snort. “From what I know, when these eight enemy Elders attacked, three of them used Sovereign's Might! Clearly, they wanted Linley dead! And the shockwaves of battle even impacted my grandson, Bebe. Fortunately, I had forged a soul-protecting divine artifact for him long ago, which is why he was able to resist those green spots of light. Otherwise, he would have ended up just like Delia!”

“This was such a major affair, but your clan isn't investigating it? Hmph!” Beirut let out an angry snort, then didn't say anything further.

After these words came out, all of the Elders in the hall began to secretly speak to each other through divine sense. Even the four clan leaders seated at the front of the hall began to speak amongst themselves through divine sense. As they saw it...

The real reason why Beirut was so angry was probably because Bebe was impacted as well.

Although Bebe wasn't harmed, Beirut was clearly upset by this affair. The four clan leaders could completely understand this.

“Lord Prefect.” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch immediately said apologetically, “We, too, feel that there must have been a plot behind the attack of the eight Elders. Otherwise, how could the eight Elders have suddenly appeared as soon as Linley's group left Meer City? But...there's no way to investigate!”

“No way to investigate?” Beirut said calmly. “It's simple. Your clan has a traitor.”

“Traitor!”

This word caused the entire hall to descend into a cacophony of noise.

Forhan was so shocked that even the hair on his body stood up. His heart clenched tightly...but then he immediately calmed down. "It's fine. It's definitely fine. Aside from myself, there's no one at all who knows that I notified the eight clans. If I don't admit it, who would know? Even if Linley suspects me, does he have proof?"

Forhan's thoughts immediately firmed and coalesced around one thing – No matter what, he wasn't that traitor!

But as the saying went, a thief would always be nervous. Forhan knew that no one else knew, but he still felt rather tense.

"Father, do you think there really is a traitor?" Emanuel asked Forhan through divine sense as well.

"Possibly." Forhan put on a pretense of calm as he sent back through divine sense. "Perhaps there is a traitor. However, it's also possible that the eight great clans truly do have a way to clearly locate Linley's whereabouts."

The main hall was in a state of chaos. The Elders were all stunned.

As for Linley, he was in a state of shock as well. "Lord Beirut is being perhaps a bit too..." He didn't know what he should say. He didn't have any proof at all, but Beirut had actually acted in such a manner. Still, as Linley saw it, Beirut's behavior had always been different from that of normal people.

"Linley, is there really a traitor?" Delia, by Linley's side, asked through divine sense.

"There probably is." Linley replied.

"Who? That Forhan?" Delia glanced at Forhan as well. When thinking of possible traitors, the first person that came to mind for Delia was Forhan as well.

"If there really is a traitor, he is almost certainly the person." Linley replied.

Only now did Gislason, seated in the front of the hall, say hurriedly in response, "Lord Prefect, you say there is a traitor. Can it be that you have proof?"

"Of course I do!" Beirut laughed calmly.

Immediately, chaos erupted once more in the hall. Even Linley was stunned.

"He has proof?" Even Linley himself didn't know what proof there was.

"Proof?" Forhan, seated below, was shocked. "Impossible. Absolutely impossible. My divine clone sent the message after changing its appearance. There's definitely no one who knows about this situation."

"What is the proof?" Gislason immediately said. "If there really is a traitor who has betrayed the clan...Lord Prefect, worry not. No matter who the person is, our Four Divine Beasts clan will destroy all of the person's bodies, not leaving a single one behind!"

Gislason's words were firm and resolute.

"Right, the person must be executed!" The White Tiger Patriarch also said fiercely.

“Lord Prefect, what’s the evidence?” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch said. Everyone in the hall turned to look at Beirut, while Linley and Forhan stared at Beirut as well. They all were wondering...

What the proof was!

“I can’t say, I can’t say!” Beirut laughed calmly.

Everyone was stunned.

“Lord Prefect, what are you...” Gislason and the others were stunned, and Linley frowned in bewilderment as well.

Beirut laughed calmly, “There’s no point to me saying it. Only two individuals know about this. One is myself! The other is an almighty Sovereign! Do you think that a Sovereign will come bear witness about a matter like this? As for the details...it involves some of the secrets of the Sovereign. I dare not reveal them.”

Everyone was stupefied.

Linley was dazed as well. How did a Sovereign get involved in this?

“Lord Prefect, are you saying that you are unable to provide any proof?” The voice of the Grand Elder rang out in the hall.

“Right. I am unable to provide any proof.” Beirut nodded.

The Grand Elder said respectfully, “Lord Prefect, if you don’t provide any proof, then there’s no way this matter can be addressed. It’s uncertain as to whether or not there is a traitor! In a situation where there is no proof, it is best not to cause everyone to worry.”

“Laughable!”

Beirut stared at the Grand Elder. “What, can it be that you think I am lying?”

The Grand Elder was speechless.

“Little Sis.” Gislason hurriedly shouted at her through divine sense, “This Lord Prefect clearly wants to pursue this matter to the end. Let him pursue it if he wishes to. If he wants to find a traitor, in the end, he’ll still have to provide us with evidence that we find compelling. If he just randomly points at someone, our Four Divine Beasts clan won’t accept it either! It is best not to irritate him just yet.”

Gislason asked solemnly, “Lord Prefect, dare I ask, do you know who the traitor is?”

Immediately, the entire hall fell silent.

Linley listened carefully as well. Beirut laughed calmly, then stretched out his right hand, pointing down at Forhan, seated in front of them. “The traitor of your Four Divine Beasts clan is him! Forhan!!!”

“Forhan!!!” When Beirut barked out this name, it echoed throughout the hall, and Forhan’s face immediately became exceedingly unsightly to look at.

Linley felt astonished and surprised. He immediately asked through divine sense, “Lord Beirut, what are you...?”

“Don’t worry about it. I have my own plans. All you need to do is watch.” Beirut replied through divine sense.

All of the Elders within the hall turned to look at Forhan, who immediately rose to his feet, a look of anger on his face. In a sonorous voice, he said, “Lord Prefect, I, Forhan, am a third generation member of the clan. In the past ten thousand years, I have killed two enemy Seven Star Fiends! My son lost his most powerful divine clone while battling the enemy as well. And you say I am a traitor? Haha...”

Forhan actually began to laugh loudly, from his ‘grief and rage’. The anger and grief within that laugh caused many of the Elders present to believe Forhan.

Clearly, this Beirut hadn’t been able to provide any real evidence at all, and yet he pointed to Forhan as being the traitor. If it was a junior member of the clan, or a member who had joined the clan just recently, the Elders might believe it.

But this was Forhan. The son of the Grand Elder!

They didn’t believe Forhan would betray the clan!

“Lord Prefect.” The Grand Elder stood up, those eyes of hers behind that silver mask radiating an angry look. In a fierce voice, she said, “This Forhan is my son. Over the course of countless years, I have always understood him very well! I dare to guarantee that he definitely is not a traitor! And he can’t possibly be the traitor!”

A calm smile was still on Beirut’s face.

“Oh, you don’t admit it?” Beirut looked sideways towards Forhan.

“Forhan, you think that since you acted stealthily and secretly, as long as you don’t admit it, no one would find out, right?” Beirut laughed calmly. “But you forgot something. There is no way for you to notice when a Sovereign is paying attention to you!”

Forhan’s heart trembled. “Can it be that a Sovereign was aware of everything I did? Impossible, impossible! How could there be such a coincidence, that a Sovereign just so happened to notice what I was doing?” Forhan repeatedly tried to convince himself.

But on the surface, Forhan still had his head proudly raised, and he said firmly, “Lord Prefect, I, Forhan, dare to proclaim that I definitely have never betrayed the clan. Never!”

“I won’t waste words.” Beirut looked towards him. “You believe you are innocent, right??”

Forhan raised his head proudly, then nodded. “Of course!”

Beirut nodded slightly. “Very well, then. If you truly are innocent, then don’t resist. I will use a hypnotic technique against you. While hypnotized, you will tell the truth to everyone.”

Linley, by now, understood what Beirut intended. “Forhan is a Seven Star Fiend, after all, and even amongst the Elders, he is ranked amongst the most powerful. And he is also a member of the Azure Dragon clan, with that innate azure glow protecting his soul. Most likely even Lord Beirut isn’t capable of hypnotizing him against his will.”

Hypnotizing a Seven Star Fiend was very hard.

A Seven Star Fiend who also had, as an innate ability, that azure light protecting his soul...the number of people in the Infernal Realm capable of hypnotizing him could probably be counted on one hand.

“Hypnotize?” Forhan said angrily. “Lord Prefect, I am no traitor! You even want me to undergo ‘hypnotism’. Although you are a lofty and mighty figure, Lord Prefect, I dare say that you are going too far in abusing others!”

“Impudence!” Gislason barked.

Forhan took a large step forward.

“Bang!” He fell to his knees.

“Patriarch!” Forhan said furiously. “Given the situation, there’s nothing I have to say for myself. The Lord Prefect sullyng me is one thing, but he even wants to hypnotize me and wants me not to resist. I, Forhan, am an Elder of the mighty Four Divine Beasts clan! I am also a Seven Star Fiend! I won’t accept an insult like this!”

Forhan raised his head proudly. “Patriarch, if you are afraid of the power and authority of the Lord Prefect, then today, I, Forhan, will grant the Lord Prefect his wish and accept death! The Lord Prefect can do as he pleases and execute me if he wishes! But you, Beirut...even though you are the Lord Prefect, even though you have shown great benevolence to the clan, I refuse to allow you to insult me any further! Even if you kill me, I won’t let you sully me!”

Forhan closed his eyes. “If you want to kill me, then do so!”

Immediately, the Elders in the hall all began to speak through divine sense.

“Forhan, just accept the hypnotism. When the time comes, the Lord Prefect will naturally know that you are innocent.” Gislason said.

“I’ve already suffered enough insults. To suffer hypnotism without resisting?” Forhan’s tears began to fall down, and he said in a high-pitched voice, “Patriarch...when the ancestor was alive, who would have dared to treat an Elder of our clan in such a way?”

These words struck right at the hearts of quite a few of the Elders who were present.

When the ancestors had been alive, the Four Divine Beasts clan wouldn’t have even held the Asuras of the Infernal Realm in much regard.

Beirut laughed.

“Haha!”

Beirut’s laughter echoed in the main hall, and he stood up and walked downwards.

“If you want to kill me, then kill me.” Forhan shut his eyes, kneeling there, the picture of rage and grief.

“Lord Prefect.” Gislason said hurriedly.

Beirut just walked out of the hall, laughing calmly. “Kid, your acting abilities aren’t bad. Fine. Today, I won’t force you to die. You say that I sully your reputation? Then I will permit you to live a few more months...and in a few more months, I’ll see what else you have to say for yourself!”

After finishing his words, Beirut, with a swirl of his cloak, exited.

“I, Forhan, am not a traitor. Several months from now, I still won’t be a traitor!” Forhan knelt there, but his head was held high.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 54,

Nowhere to Run

Beirut's sudden departure caused the atmosphere at the banquet to become rather awkward. This celebratory banquet thus ended very early. Gislason and the other clan leaders bade farewell to Phusro, Bebe, and Linley, and then Linley's group left as well.

Most of the Elders were gone now, while Forhan still stood there in the main hall.

"Forhan." A cold, fierce voice.

Forhan raised his head. The Grand Elder was walking towards him, and she stared at him with a clear gaze. Through divine sense, she asked, "Forhan, I ask you, did those eight enemy Elders go kill Linley because of you?"

"No!" Forhan didn't hesitate at all. "Mother, I definitely am not a traitor! Mother, you must believe me!"

The Grand Elder stared at him, but since Forhan had decided to put on an act, how could he let her see anything amiss?

The Grand Elder seemed to relax slightly. In a slightly softer voice, she said, "Fine. I believe you. As long as you aren't the traitor, the clan won't permit any outsiders to kill you." After speaking, the Grand Elder left as well.

Within that cold and gloomy underground hall.

Forhan was there by himself. "Judging from Beirut's words, it seems as though he really is certain that I am the traitor? Can it be that a Sovereign truly was watching? But although Sovereign's are high and mighty, they have their own personalities and human characteristic. They'll often wander about as well. Perhaps one really did find out."

Forhan was currently pondering nonstop.

"Hmph. Who cares if a Sovereign found out or not. How could a mighty Sovereign intervene personally in a minor matter like this?" Forhan made up his mind. "As long as I confidently assert that I am not a traitor, then that means I am not!"

Forhan only had to do one thing; deny it, no matter what!

Within that gorge in the Skyrise Mountains. Beirut hadn't gone to live in the place which the Four Divine Beasts clan had arranged, instead electing to live in the gorge, with Linley and Bebe as his neighbors.

Within Linley's living room. Linley, Bebe, Phusro, Beirut were present and seated, while Delia was outside with Wade.

"Grandpa, since you and the Sovereign already know everything and know that Forhan is the traitor, just go ahead and kill him." Bebe snorted. "I've never liked that Forhan."

Linley laughed, "Bebe, deep within the hearts and minds of the clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan is a certain pride. If Forhan is killed without any evidence of his guilt, although the clan leaders and Elders

might not immediately have a falling out with Beirut over this, they will remember it and harbor hatred in their hearts.”

“Right.” Beirut nodded and laughed. “Don’t be fooled by how respectful those four clan leaders act towards me. They are, after all, the sons and daughter of four Sovereigns. In their hearts, they are still quite prideful. I can’t go too far.”

Linley felt rather grateful towards Beirut.

Actually, why would Beirut care about if the Four Divine Beasts clan hated him or not? The reason Beirut was acting in this manner was because he was worried that Linley would be ostracized afterwards, and that his life in the clan would become miserable.

“Lord Beirut, you said that in a few months, you would make it so that Forhan would have nothing more to say for himself. What’s the plan?” Linley immediately asked.

“Right, Grandpa, what is your plan?”

“Haha...” Beirut laughed.

Phusro laughed as well. “Bebe, have you forgotten that a year ago, you met your grandmother in Meer City? What did you acquire on that visit?”

“The soul slice fragment. What about it?” Bebe said, puzzled.

Beirut laughed, “That soul slice fragment was delivered by an old friend of mine. I had your grandmother give it to you because I was busy accompanying my friend, so I didn’t have time to go find you.”

“That Forhan is a descendant of the Azure Dragon clan. With that innate ability protecting him, I’m unable to forcibly hypnotize him. However, that old friend of mine can.” Beirut was completely confident.

A supreme expert capable of making soul slice fragments?

“If this person is willing to help.” Linley rejoiced in his heart. “There’s no way Forhan will be able to escape!”

“This time, for Delia’s sake, I had to hurry over here. I was worried that my old friend might have left, but just now, I managed to reach him. That friend of mine is still in Indigo Prefecture. He’ll arrive here in a few months.” Beirut laughed calmly.

“Grandpa, are you sure about this?” Bebe said, rather worried. “Forhan has the protection of his innate ability.”

“Absolutely sure!” Beirut said.

Hearing this, Linley felt jubilant, but at the same time, he sighed to himself: “The friends which a supreme expert like Lord Beirut makes...are all supreme experts as well. Even someone like Forhan, protected by his innate ability, will still be mesmerized. What an amazing level of accomplishment does one have to be at, to be so skilled with regards to the soul?”

They waited leisurely, but as the days passed, the news that the Lord Prefect had accused Forhan of being a traitor quickly spread throughout the entire Skyrite Mountains. Quite a few clansmen were secretly furious, feeling the Lord Prefect to be abusing his power.

In the blink of an eye, several months passed. On this day, Linley and Delia were currently playing with little Wade in front of their house.

Wade was already able to walk wobbly.

While supporting her son, Delia suddenly raised her head. "Linley, news about that affair from last time has spread quite far. Even the people in our valley know about it. Just now, when I was taking Wade out for a walk, I heard clansmen from the other branches in our valley say that the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture was sullyng Elder Forhan. But of course, there were others who said that the reason Forhan refused to accept the hypnotism was due to fear borne out of guilt...still, the majority seem to support Forhan."

"Don't worry about it. When that expert comes, all shall be made clear." Linley said, then half-knelt. "Wade, you can do it. Take a few more steps. Come to your father."

"Uh...uh..."

Wade beamed, his dimply mouth curving upwards as he tottered forwards with small steps. Finally, he made it to Linley's arms.

"Father." Wade said sweetly.

"Come, give me a kiss." Linley said dotingly.

While holding his son, Linley glanced sideways at Delia. Just a few months ago, he had been lost amidst his despair. But now, everything had changed. All because of Beirut. "I will never, ever forget the kindness he has shown me."

Just as Linley's little three-person household was in the midst of their joy...

"Beirut!" A clear voice echoed in the air above the Skyrite Mountains.

"Eh?" Linley and Delia all raised their heads, surprised.

Beirut, Phusro, and Bebe immediately flew out, and Beirut laughed towards Linley, "Linley, that good friend of mine is here. Let's go. It is time for Forhan's true face to be revealed."

Linley and Delia, carrying their son, followed them out of the great gorge.

In the air above the Skyrite Mountains. A single, solitary figure hovered there in mid-air, his entire body covered with a bluish-black robe. His wavy, bluish-black hair was unbound, and his thick black eyebrows were shaped like two swords.

He just stood there, standing in the air above the Skyrite Mountains.

Not a single one of the patrolling warriors dared to go close to him. Gislason, leading a number of Elders, hurried over.

"Patriarch, this strange fellow flew there, shouted 'Beirut', then stood there without moving. We wanted to shoo him off...but all of our brothers who approached him lost their consciousness and plummeted to the ground. Only after landing did they regain consciousness." The captain of the patrolling warriors hurriedly reported.

Gislason, hearing this, couldn't help but frown.

Gislason immediately flew over and said sonorously, "I am Patriarch Gislason of the Azure Dragon clan. Might I ask who you are?"

Only now did this strange fellow open his eyes, glancing sideways as Gislason approached. Gislason couldn't but feel his heart tremble. He actually had the feeling as though within the strange man's eyes were a pair of illusory serpents.

"Gislason?" The strange man said calmly. "I'm waiting for Beirut."

Gislason frowned. Although the person in front of him was very powerful, Gislason wasn't afraid of him... 'soul defense' was Gislason's strong point. After all, he had a perfect, undamaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

"Then please come to my place to rest while we await the Lord Prefect." Gislason laughed.

"No need." The strange man said.

"Haha... Dunnington [Dan'ning'dun], you were rather slow." A loud laugh rang out, and Beirut's form appeared in the distance. In but a moment, he arrived. As for Linley and Bebe, they flew over from behind as well.

"Beirut." The strange fellow began to laugh, immediately going to greet him.

Linley and Delia flew over as well. They couldn't help but look carefully at this person. But as Linley looked at him... he felt as though the wavy hair of this strange person had transformed into countless tiny serpents.

"Eh?" Linley was shocked. "What a strange feeling."

"Lord Prefect, this is Dunnington? The legendary 'Dunnington' of the Chaotic Sea?" Gislason said disbelievingly.

The Infernal Realm had quite a few legendary figures, which even the likes of Gislason had only heard of, not met. As for this Dunnington, in the Infernal Realm, he was a legendary figure on the same level as Beirut, or perhaps who had even surpassed Beirut!

"Right." Beirut laughed. "This friend of mine is the number one expert of the Chaotic Sea, aside from the Chaotic Sea Sovereign. Dunnington!"

The Infernal Realm was divided into five continents and two seas. The 'Chaotic Sea' was the largest region, with the most experts. Dunnington's name, for countless years now, had reverberated in the Infernal Realm.

Dunnington was strongest in the Edicts of Death.

Each of the Seven Elemental Laws all had their own specialties and mysteries, which were all divided up clearly and thus could be fused clearly. But the Four Edicts were different. The Four Edicts didn't have specific 'profound mysteries'; as to whether or not a person had mastered enough of them to become a God or a Highgod, the natural Laws themselves would judge.

Nobody could be certain as to whether or not Dunnington had reached the stage of being a Paragon or not.

But...

If one was to discuss who, in the entire Infernal Realm, had the most impressive accomplishments with regards to the soul, the vast majority would say the name, 'Dunnington'. A freakishly, monstrously powerful figure.

In describing Beirut's power, one could use the phrase 'sudden rise to prominence' in describing the manner in which he proved his power through blood-soaked battle.

But the power of Dunnington...had been publicly acknowledged through countless years through countless trials.

Many people believed that Dunnington had already reached the utter pinnacle of power in the Edicts of Death and had become a Paragon. But of course, Dunnington himself wouldn't tell anyone...and there was no way for others to be completely certain.

"Gislason, go arrange for Forhan to be found and brought here." Beirut laughed.

Gislason already could guess what was going on, but he still instructed that Forhan be brought over.

Beirut and Dunnington flew together, side by side, while Gislason, Phusro, Linley, Bebe, and Delia followed from behind.

"Phusro, this Dunnington, the number one figure of the Chaotic Sea aside from the Sovereign...he is very strong?" Linley asked through divine sense. Linley simply hadn't trained for long enough; he didn't know anything about some of the legendary figures of the Infernal Realm.

"Very strong? Are you joking?" Phusro sent back through divine sense. "This Dunnington is probably a Highgod Paragon. You tell me, is he strong?"

Linley was badly startled. He couldn't help but take a closer look at Dunnington. While flying, Dunnington's long, wavy, bluish-black hair billowed casually in the wind, but as it did, it gave off a very strange impression, as though each strand of hair had turned into a long serpent, or arrows of ice...

As he stared at Dunnington, Linley felt his head grow dizzy.

"How terrifying." Linley was secretly shocked.

"Boss, I keep on having the feeling as though the robe which Dunnington is wearing is actually a strange monster of the deep sea. So strange." Bebe sent through divine sense. It wasn't just Linley who felt strange things when looking at Dunnington.

Within the main hall of Patriarch Gislason's residence. Everyone sat down. Linley raised his head, looking towards the outside. The Grand Elder was walking in. "Elder Brother, which person was the one who had been loudly shouting for the Lord Prefect?"

Gislason rose to his feet, introducing, "Little Sis, this gentleman is Mr. Dunnington of the Chaotic Sea."

The Grand Elder was shocked.

"Mr. Dunnington." The Grand Elder said in a friendly manner. They addressed Beirut as 'Lord Prefect', because they felt grateful towards him for his kindness. As for others, even if they were as powerful as Beirut, they would at most address others as 'Mr.'.

As soon as the Grand Elder sat down, footsteps rang out from outside as well.

"Haha, they finally came." Beirut laughed.

“Which one is it?” Dunnington spoke out calmly.

“The one with the yellow hair.” Beirut said. Forhan and several other Elders walked in together. When Forhan entered the main hall and saw Beirut, the look on his face turned rather ugly.

“Oh?” Dunnington said.

Very suddenly...

Twin illusory blurs shot out from Dunnington’s eyes, which suddenly surrounded and enveloped Forhan. Forhan wasn’t able to react at all, and Linley’s eyes couldn’t help but light up. “Dunnington’s actions appeared simple, but there definitely must have been a struggle within Forhan’s mind.”

Forhan’s facial muscles twitched slightly, but then he calmed down.

“All done.” Dunnington laughed, turning his gaze towards Beirut. “The innate ability of this Azure Dragon clan really is formidable. I had to use some real power.”

Beirut laughed back. “Stop showing off and help me interrogate him.”

“What are you doing?” The Grand Elder said frantically.

“Just hypnotism.” Beirut laughed calmly. “You can see for yourselves if he is innocent or not”

Gislason gave the Grand Elder a meaningful look. Since the hypnotism had already been used, then they might as well let this thing come to a conclusion. “Hmph.” The Grand Elder let out a low snort, but in the end, still sat down. “I want to see what you’ll have to say for yourself after it is proven that my son is no traitor.”

“That’s Beirut’s responsibility, not mine.” A hint of a smile appeared on Dunnington’s face.

“Forhan, tell me, were you the one who leaked information about Linley’s whereabouts to the eight great clans, resulting in the eight Elders attacking Linley?” Dunnington said calmly.

Immediately, everyone in the hall, including Gislason, the Grand Elder, the various other Elders, and Linley all looked nervously towards Forhan. Linley stared at the dazed Forhan. “If it wasn’t him, this will be very awkward.”

A calm look was on Forhan’s face, and his eyes were lifeless. He said mechanically, “Yes!”

“Yes!”

The voice echoed in the hall. Instantly, everyone fell silent. The Grand Elder wore her customary silver mask, and there was no way to see the look on her face...but disbelief could be seen filling her eyes.

“Did you hear that?” Beirut laughed as he looked towards the Grand Elder and Gislason.

“How is that possible?” The Elders in the hall were all stunned.

“Ask him...ask him why!” The Grand Elder’s entire body was trembling. The Grand Elder didn’t want to believe it. She truly didn’t understand...why had her son come to this decision? When a person was hypnotized, they wouldn’t tell any lies. This was an ironclad rule.

Dunnington continued, “Why did you leak the information and want Linley to be killed?”

“He deserves to die!”

Forhan said mechanically, “He is a junior descendant of the clan. By what right does he hold the Azure Dragon ring, the Sovereign artifact of our ancestor!?”

“Sovereign artifact?” Dunnington couldn’t help but look at Linley with surprise. The other Elders all were looking towards Linley in surprise as well.

Forhan continued, “Acquiring the Sovereign artifact was one thing, but my son lost his most powerful divine clone because of him. And he’s just a mere God...and yet he’s already so powerful. When he becomes a Highgod, his status in the clan will definitely be higher than mine. I, Forhan, look up at him and live beneath him, day in and day out? This sort of life is nothing but torture...and so he must die.”

“A God?” Quite a few Elders in the hall all looked towards Linley, astonished.

They didn’t know Linley was a God! They also didn’t know that Linley had a Sovereign artifact.

“So that’s what this was all about. So that’s what this was all about.” The Grand Elder stood up, murmuring softly.

“Whoosh!”

The Grand Elder’s body suddenly appeared next to Forhan’s. With a vicious palm blow, she smashed down at Forhan’s head. With a ‘bang’ sound, Forhan’s head exploded, then two divine sparks fell out as well.

Linley sucked in a sudden breath. “The Grand Elder...”

The entire hall instantly fell silent. Even Beirut and Dunnington stared at the Grand Elder in shock.

“All the clones of those who betray the clan are to be put to death!” The Grand Elder said in a low voice. Her eyes turned moist...but in an instant, they dried out.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 55,

Beirut's Craftiness

It had been Forhan who had leaked the information. This had already shocked quite a few people, but the sudden attack by the Grand Elder, who had personally executed Forhan...this caused the entire hall to fall completely, utterly silent.

"I didn't expect that it really was him!" A long, low sigh echoed in the main hall.

The speaker was Gislason. At this time, Linley was looking very carefully at the Grand Elder. "The Grand Elder actually straightforwardly executed her own son!" Linley was completely astonished.

"Elder Brother, Forhan has already been punished accordance with the rules of the clan!" The Grand Elder said in a cold, calm voice. "This matter is concluded. I'll leave for now."

"Alright. You can go back and rest." Gislason understood that his little sister was feeling terrible right now.

"Wait a moment." A voice suddenly rang out.

The Grand Elder had already started to leave, but now she came to a halt, turning to stare at the seated Beirut. In a low voice, she said, "Lord Prefect, is there something else you need?" Although her voice was very calm and tranquil, Linley could sense the unbridled anger that was hidden within that calm!

Her son was already died, but Beirut still wouldn't give it a rest?

Linley couldn't help but look towards Beirut, who had a calm smile on his face. Beirut said, "According to the rules of the Four Divine Beasts clan, those who betray the clan shall have all their bodies and clones destroyed, correct?"

"Correct." The Grand Elder raised her chin, looking towards Beirut. "Lord Prefect, why do you ask this?"

"I simply would like to ask, how many clones did Forhan have?" Beirut laughed calmly.

The Grand Elder was silent for a moment. The mask on her face prevented others from seeing her expression, but Linley could see that the Grand Elder's entire body was trembling slightly. Clearly, she was already utterly livid.

"Including his original body, three clones in total." The Grand Elder said in a low voice. "However, my son's original body was still at the Saint level. Thus, when I killed him, only two divine sparks came out. Lord Prefect, I wonder if my answer is satisfactory for you?"

"Little Sis." Gislason reproved softly.

The Grand Elder's words and attitude were clearly hostile.

Beirut let out a calm laugh. "It's fine. She just killed her own son with her own two hands. I can understand why she is in a poor mood. But...Gaia [Gai'ya], I hope that you will remember that your son was a traitor to the clan. He deserved his death!" Beirut spoke with no mercy or remorse.

The Grand Elder's body shuddered once.

“Alright.” Beirut stood up. “This matter is at an end! Dunnington, Phusro, Linley, come, let’s all go back.”

Linley’s group immediately rose.

As Beirut walked past the blood-stained corpse, he glanced sideways at it and said calmly, “Hurry up and dispose of the body. It is foul to behold!” After speaking, Beirut left, while Dunnington and the others followed.

As Linley left, he glanced at the Grand Elder. The Grand Elder just waved her hand, and the corpse on the ground transformed into dust.

“Let’s go. Let’s go. I didn’t expect that Forhan was a traitor.” The Elders left, all disgusted. In but a few moments, the only ones remaining in the hall were Gislason and the Grand Elder.

The Grand Elder stood in the center of the hall, not moving at all.

“Little Sis, Forhan was a traitor to the clan. He deserved to die!” Gislason walked over, resting his hand on the Grand Elder’s shoulder. Once a person became known as a traitor to the clan, the other members of the Four Divine Beasts clan would hold that person in contempt. Even though Forhan was dead, nobody felt pity for him.

“I know.”

The Grand Elder’s voice was very low. “But I still feel miserable. Alright, Elder Brother. I’ll go back now.” The Grand Elder didn’t say anything else. She turned and immediately left. Her son had become a traitor to the clan and had been killed by her with her own two hands. Perhaps the person hurt the most by Forhan’s affair, in the entire Skyrite Mountains, was the Grand Elder.

Linley and the others flew down, entering their gorge.

“Haha, awesome, awesome!” Bebe laughed loudly. “I never liked that father-son duo. They lusted after the Boss’ Coiling Dragon ring from the very beginning, and I suspected them long ago regarding this event as well. So it really was them. An excellent death! An excellent death!”

Linley laughed as well.

He, too, had suspected Forhan, but he wasn’t sufficiently certain. Why, however, had Beirut dared to act in such a way? Wasn’t Lord Beirut concerned...that Forhan might have been wrongly accused? How would Lord Beirut have resolved the situation, if that had been the case?

Linley was puzzled about this the entire time.

Beirut, Dunnington, Phusro, and Linley sat down within Linley’s home, around that stone table. Linley hesitated for a moment, but in the end still voiced his puzzlement. “Lord Beirut, how could you be so certain that Forhan was the traitor?”

Beirut looked at him, a hint of satire in his gaze. “You were the one who told me that it was he!”

“I told you that I didn’t have any evidence, just suspicions.” Linley said hurriedly.

“Haha...” The nearby Dunnington seemed to have heard something enormously funny as he began to laugh loudly.

Linley couldn’t help but feel lost. What was so funny? The nearby Bebe spoke out. “Grandpa, can it be that you really did learn about this early on from a Sovereign?”

“How could I have known about this early on?” Beirut laughed. “If I had known early on, I would have sent someone to warn Linley long ago. In truth, before today, I wasn’t completely certain either.”

Linley was stunned. Not completely certain?

“But Lord Beirut, you even invited Dunnington over, then did a forcible hypnotism. If Forhan hadn’t been the traitor, wouldn’t that have been embarrassing?” Linley immediately said.

“Haha...” Dunnington once again started to laugh loudly as he glanced sideways at Beirut. “Beirut, stop intentionally teasing Linley. I’ll tell him!” Dunnington immediately began to explain the truth.

As for Linley, he listened intently.

“This Lord Beirut of yours wasn’t sure at all about whether or not Forhan was the traitor.” Dunnington laughed. “That’s why he invited me over. After I hypnotized Forhan, I first did a quick review of Forhan’s memories!”

Normally speaking, there was no way to review a Deity’s memories.

But once a person was hypnotized and completely unable to resist, a terrifying figure like Dunnington was able to easily review the memories of the hypnotized person.

“After reviewing his memories for just a moment, I knew!” Dunnington laughed. “That he was the traitor!”

“But what if he wasn’t?” Bebe immediately asked, and Linley looked at Dunnington as well, puzzled.

Dunnington laughed. “If he wasn’t? Easy!”

“Then I would have immediately allowed Forhan to regain consciousness.” Dunnington glanced sideways at Beirut. “Afterwards, I would say a few words of praise, along the lines of, ‘The Azure Dragon clan really does live up to its name. Even I am unable to forcibly hypnotize him.’”

Dunnington’s words completely flabbergasted Linley, Delia, and Bebe.

Indeed, when a person was hypnotized, they would lose their consciousness. If Dunnington was successful in his hypnosis attempt, he could let Forhan regain his consciousness after investigating Forhan’s memories. Even Forhan himself would only have felt that his head had gone dizzy for a moment. He wouldn’t feel much else.

“Formidable.” Linley sighed to himself.

If Forhan wasn’t the traitor, Dunnington could just deliberately lie and claim that he had been unable to hypnotize Forhan. The end result would simply be that Gislason, the Grand Elder, and the others would feel that they had gained a great deal of face. After all...even a supreme expert such as Dunnington had been unable to forcibly hypnotize an Elder of the clan.

“This really was an excellent idea.” Bebe sighed in amazement as well.

“Excellent my ass.” Dunnington stroked his beard. “If Forhan truly hadn’t been the traitor, then I, Dunnington, would have suffered a blow to my reputation.”

“Stop worrying.” Beirut began to laugh. “Your reputation wouldn’t have suffered anything. Even if you publicly acknowledged that you were unable to hypnotize Forhan, others would just think that this innate ability of the Azure Dragon clan is incredible. They wouldn’t think that you are weak.”

Dunnington raised his eyebrows, laughing.

His power was something that was publicly acknowledged, after countless shocking, world-shaking battles. The number one expert of the Chaotic Sea, aside from the Sovereign. Who would dare belittle him?

“Linley, Bebe.” Beirut suddenly said. “After this affair, although the Grand Elder has nothing to say for herself, in her heart, she certainly is unhappy. I think you’d best leave the Skyrite Mountains and come to my place.”

Leave the Skyrite Mountains? Linley couldn’t help but turn and look at Delia.

“Excellent!” Bebe said jubilantly. “The Skyrite Mountains are rather boring. I haven’t even gone to Grandpa’s prefectural manor. I want to go and have some fun.”

“Delia, what do you think?” Linley looked towards Delia as he spoke to her through divine sense.

Delia looked at Wade, nestled in her arms, then replied through divine sense, “Wade is still young. It’s best not to make him tired by running all over the place. When Wade can take care of himself, we can go out wandering again.”

“Right.” Linley nodded. After their discussion through divine sense, Linley had come to his decision.

“Boss, wanna go?” Bebe immediately asked through divine sense.

Linley laughed, then shook his head. “Lord Prefect, Bebe, I won’t go for now. Wade is still young...and with Delia and myself living in the gorge with the other members of the Yulan branch, life is still fairly comfortable. As for what the Grand Elder will do...I won’t go to Bloodbath Gorge. Even if she isn’t happy, what can she do?”

“Fine, then I won’t pressure you to come.” Beirut laughed calmly and nodded.

“Alas.” Bebe let out a sad sigh. “Boss, you accompany Delia and your son, then. I’ll head there for now.”

Linley laughed and nodded. He could tell that although Bebe had always stayed here with him, Bebe’s heart wasn’t here. “Most likely, Bebe is still missing Ninny.” Linley sighed to himself. “However, Nisse is in the Jadefloat Continent.”

That very night, Beirut, Dunnington, Phusro, and Bebe all left the Skyrite Mountains. The four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan as well as a large group of other people came to send them off. Afterwards, Linley’s life returned to a rare calm.

Linley spent the calm days accompanying his wife, his son, and training.

In the blink of an eye, three years passed.

Linley was currently in his room, reading a book, while his four divine clones were all in the midst of training.

“Father, the snow is so thick. Quick, come look!”

Suddenly, a bright, clear voice rang out in the room. Hearing it, Linley couldn’t help but grin as he stood up, walking towards the outside. A youthful, tender-looking lad was outside, grabbing fistfuls of snow, while Delia was there playing with him.

“Father, look. That’s the snowman that I made.” Wade, seeing Linley come out, immediately ran over while calling out to him.

As Wade ran over, he leapt off the ground, giving Linley a flying hug. “Father, the snowman is over there. Look.” Wade’s little face was tender and ruddy, so soft, it seemed as though one would be able to squeeze water out of his face with a pinch.

Linley liked Wade very much.

By contrast, when he had been in the Yulan continent, Linley had always been training when Sasha and Taylor had been growing up. He hadn’t spent any time with his children.

“Oh, Wade. This is the snowman you made?” Linley turned to look. The snowman was just a pair of snowballs, one large, one small, with a few gems serving as the eyes and nose. There were actually a total of three snowmen; two large ones and one smaller one.

“Right..” Wade nodded solemnly, as though this were a weighty matter. “Father, look. That one is you. That one is Mother. That one is me.”

Hearing this, Linley couldn’t help but start to laugh.

“Wade, stop hanging on to your father. Come down.” Delia said.

“Oh.” Wade obediently let go of Linley and fell down, but the ground was slick. As he landed, he slipped and fell, and Delia couldn’t help but immediately go help him back up.

Linley chuckled, then casually, leisurely began to walk forward on the snowy ground. With each step, he left a footprint behind. The snow had come to a halt long ago, but the snow on the ground was fairly thick. Everything within his field of vision had turned a silvery white color.

“Father, Father.” Wade’s call rang out from behind.

Linley turned to look, but as he did, he saw out of the corner of his eyes his own footprint. He had left a deep impression in the snow, but a hint of green grass was still forcing its way out from within it. In that instant, when Linley saw that hint of green...

And when he heard his son calling from afar, ‘Father, Father!’...

Linley’s mind suddenly swept through the various events of recent years, from Delia’s life-threatening crisis to his own despair, then his escape from that despair, followed by last few years of calm, blissful life.

“BOOM!”

A green spot of light suddenly sprang into existence within Linley’s mind, and in the next instant, it transformed into a green sun, illuminating his entire mind.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 56,

Vitality

Delia was by Wade's side, but she noticed that Linley wasn't moving at all. Even his eyes had closed. "What's going on with Linley? Can it be..." Seeing Linley in such a state, Delia naturally would suspect...

That he had gained a sudden insight and broken through!

This was indeed the case. At this moment, Linley finally moved through the initial threshold of gaining a basic understanding of the Profound Mysteries of Vitality. Training in a profound mystery always had two major barriers; the first was the initial threshold, while the other was the bottleneck before mastery. Although there might be some difficulties encountered while training, as long as one persevered, one would be able to overcome them.

But that initial threshold as well as the bottleneck before mastery couldn't just be overcome through effort. It required talent, luck, and that instant of sudden enlightenment.

Once that moment of sudden enlightenment came, the speed at which one gained understanding would be astonishingly fast, allowing one to advance very rapidly. However, moments later, the speed at which Linley gained comprehension began to slow down. After all, that moment of insight only allowed a person to gain a portion of understanding. The rest required training.

Linley opened his eyes, and as he did, he saw Delia.

"You made a breakthrough?" Delia said softly.

Linley laughed and nodded. "I've finally passed the initial threshold for understanding the Profound Mysteries of Vitality...and indeed, understanding this profound mystery isn't an easy task. I had to experience many things first, and have my entire mentality change...only after all of these things was I able to grasp that sudden moment of spiritual awakening and enlightenment."

Delia couldn't help but reveal a smile on her face.

"Linley, didn't you say that after becoming a Highgod, it would become much harder to fuse profound mysteries?" Delia couldn't help but ask.

When fusing profound mysteries, the difficulty level was lessened if one fused the mysteries while gaining insights to them. This was much like how if a large tree was crooked when it was young, if it kept on growing crookedly until it reached maturity, it would naturally become a crooked tree. But if you were to have a straight tree begin to grow crooked only after it reached maturity, it would be hard.

"Fusing is far more difficult than gaining initial insights into a profound mystery." Linley shook his head. "Otherwise, there wouldn't be so few Paragons, despite the passage of countless years."

"The further one advances, the harder fusing becomes." Linley sighed. "Look at me. It took me less than a thousand years to fuse three profound mysteries, but to fuse the fourth...although six centuries have passed, I have still only been able to fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength with the Throbbing Pulse of the World. I haven't been able to improve at all."

He hadn't made any improvements; was he supposed to just keep on wasting time?

Based on the historical pace of advancement by other people, even the greatest of geniuses would find it virtually impossible to fuse a fourth profound mystery in under ten thousand years.

“In addition, once I become a Highgod, my power will increase tenfold.” Linley said confidently. “By then, even if I encounter an Asura, I will at least be able to stay alive.”

When his soul was improved to the Highgod level, he would be able to absorb more amethysts and reach a new peak.

In addition, Linley’s ‘Blackstone Space’ had previously used God-level divine earth power. Once he became a Highgod, he would be able to use Highgod-level divine earth power to execute it. The power of his Blackstone Space would therefore rise once again!

When Purgatory Commander Resigem set up his Gravitational Space, he used Highgod-level divine earth power.

Once Linley became a Highgod, the ‘Spiritual Chaos’ component of his Blackstone Space would also become more than ten times stronger! The gravitational pull would also rise to a terrifying new level. By then, even Seven Star Fiends would find it hard to move freely within the Blackstone Space.

By then...

Linley’s Blackstone Space wouldn’t be too far off from Purgatory Commander Reisgem’s.

“In addition, only after becoming a Highgod will I have any hope of being able to repair the Coiling Dragon ring.” Linley sighed. “Although spiritual energy can be used to repair it, this is a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, after all. My current spiritual energy is too weak. Once I become a Highgod, I can rely on amethysts to strengthen my soul to the limits of spiritual strength for a Highgod. Even if I’m not able to completely repair it, I can still make it so that it recovers a portion of its power.”

If one was too greedy, one would be like a python who attempted to swallow an elephant. The consequences would be obvious.

At present, as soon as Linley broke through to become a Highgod, his strength would become terrifying. Thus, it was best for him to become a Highgod as quickly as possible.

Time flowed on like water, advancing silently and soundlessly. Linley quietly trained within the gorge, slowly advancing step by step. As for Wade, he grew up and became an adult as well. When the hundred year event came, Wade went to undergo the Ancestral Baptism and became a water-type Deity.

“Wade’s power is too weak. In the Infernal Realm, a Demigod’s power is absolutely insufficient for roaming about.” Although Linley wanted Wade to experience some hurdles and hardships, he didn’t wish for Wade to throw his life away.

Wade normally remained within the Skyrise Mountains, sparring with the other Deities.

More than a century had passed since Forhan had been killed. However, the higher level members of the Four Divine Beasts clan felt tremendous pressure! This was because the enemy eight great clans had become more and more savage, while the Four Divine Beasts clan had lost too many Elders.

The residence of Patriarch Gislason.

“Patriarch!” Garvey said frantically. “We can’t let this continue. If this continues for another millennium, our Azure Dragon clan will probably not have Seven Star Fiends left!”

Gislason's back was turned towards him, and he was silent.

"Patriarch." Garvey called out frantically.

"Then you tell me. What should we do?" Gislason said in a low voice.

Garvey hesitated slightly, then gritted his teeth. "Patriarch, order all of our forces to be withdrawn. Forget about those forces of the eight great clans and their arrogant patrols...we should just stay quietly within the Skyrise Mountains and build up our strength!"

Gislason was silent.

In the past, how glorious had the Four Divine Beasts clan been? Their fame had spread throughout all the Higher Planes and Divine Planes. Not a single clan dared to underestimate them, and the lives of the clan leaders of ordinary clans wasn't worth as much as the lives of ordinary members of the Four Divine Beasts clan.

The glory of the clan was utterly inviolable.

For countless years, although the descendants of the Four Divine Beasts clan might die, they had never lowered their heads. This was because these descendants all understood that even if they died, the clan would avenge them! The descendants of the Four Divine Beasts clan were proud and arrogant!

"Let our Four Divine Beasts clan lower our heads? Hide like turtles within the Skyrise Mountains and not go out?" Gislason said in a low voice. "Garvey, do you know what people will say about us in the outside world? They will say...that our Four Divine Beasts clan was beaten so badly by the eight great clans that we are hiding like turtles, afraid to show ourselves. That we are a pack of cowards! I am absolutely certain that this is how the eight great clans will spin the story, and that they will spread this news throughout the Infernal Realm, as well as the rest of the Four Higher Planes!"

To ordinary people, Gislason's line of thought was laughable.

That was because ordinary people had never reached the heights that Gislason had. Even in material planes, ordinary people would be willing to sacrifice their lives for the glory of their clan, much less Deities who possessed eternal life. To them, the glory of their clan was even more important!

"Garvey, you can go back for now." Gislason sighed.

"Patriarch." Garvey couldn't help but feel frantic.

"I told you to leave!"

Gislason growled. Stunned, Garvey had no choice but to leave, resigned. In the hall, the only remaining person was Gislason. His entire face was furrowed with wrinkles as he frowned, his heart filled with frustration.

He had never imagined that the incomparably firm mountains behind their clan, the ancestors, would all die.

With the ancestors dead, all the pressure now came crashing down upon the clan.

Within the gorge.

Linley, Delia, and Wade were eating together. But of course, Wade was now a handsome young man, slightly taller than even Linley, albeit somewhat thinner.

“Linley!” A voice suddenly rang out.

Linley raised his head and saw Garvey’s figure appear in mid-air, then descend. Seeing Linley’s family happily eating, Garvey let out a sigh.. “Linley, your life really is carefree and worry-less.”

“Sit.” Linley pointed in front of him. “What, are you feeling frustrated over the clan’s matters?”

“Right!” Garvey sat down.

“Uncle Garvey.” Wade called out.

Garvey laughed and nodded. “Time moves so very fast. Linley, I still remember how, over a century ago, you held Wade and Delia and hurried back. That really was a major event.”

Laughing, Linley nodded. “Right, Gravey. What happened within the clan?”

Upon hearing this subject, Garvey said bitterly, “Just today, yet another Elder of our clan lost his most powerful clone! Currently...our Azure Dragon clan, including you, Linley, only has seventeen Elders who truly possess the power of a Seven Star Fiend.”

“Seventeen?” Linley was stunned.

He still remembered how when he had accepted the position of Elder, the clan had more than thirty Elders. But now, only seventeen remained.

“After I learned this, I thought for a long time, then went to find the Patriarch. I advised the Patriarch that he should order the Elders to no longer go out and do battle, and that we should all return to the Skyrise Mountains.” Garvey clearly felt very miserable for having given this advice.

After all, he too valued the glory of the clan, did he not?

“What did the Patriarch say?” Linley asked.

“He didn’t agree.” Garvey raised his head, gulping down a cup of wine. “Every ten years, sometimes every few years, our Four Divine Beasts clan loses yet another Elder. If this continues, in a few centuries, how many Elders will our Four Divine Beasts clan have left?”

Linley felt resigned as well.

In this sort of clan war, the strength of any individual was simply insufficient.

“Enough of that. Come, drink.” Garvey raised his cup.

“Drink.” Linley responded.

Delia and Wade left the table shortly, leaving behind Linley and Garvey to chat and drink wine.

“Eh?” Linley raised his head, a hint of a smile on his lips. “He’s finally back.”

“Boss!” A figure descended from the skies, wearing a straw hat on his head. It was Bebe. Ever since he had left with Beirut, Bebe hadn’t returned a single time in the past hundred-plus years.

Linley rose to his feet.

“Boss, I missed you to death.” Bebe rushed forward, giving Linley a bearhug.

Linley and Bebe were as close as real siblings. After not having seen Bebe for so long, he naturally felt extremely happy.

“Bebe, long time no see.” Garvey greeted as well. After that affair nearly a century ago, all the Elders of the Skyrite Mountains had learned that Bebe was the grandson of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture.

“Elder Garvey.” Bebe greeted as well.

“What have you been doing for the past century?” Linley laughed as he spoke. Bebe rubbed his nose, then laughed smugly, “In the past century, I’ve roamed the entire Indigo Prefecture and visited many secret locations. Indigo Prefecture really is large. In the past hundred-plus years, I’ve only managed to visit some of the more important areas.”

“Oh, so why didn’t you continue touring?” Linley said.

Bebe pursed his lips, saying in an unruly manner, “I got bored. Didn’t want to continue.” But although he was acting in a seemingly unrestrained manner, Linley could sense a desolate aura.

At this moment, Delia and Wade hurriedly walked over from afar. Delia laughed and said from far away, “Bebe, it’s been so long since you left. Look at this fellow next to me. Do you know him?”

“The fellow next to you?” Bebe was stunned.

“Wade.” Delia laughed. “Remember now?”

“Ah?! That little fellow?!” Bebe immediately began to laugh.

Linley watched as Bebe immediately begin to chat warmly with Wade, but could still sense that within Bebe’s heart...

“Bebe’s too lonely! Once the affairs of the clan have been resolved, I’ll immediately accompany Bebe on a trip to the Jadenfloat Continent. Let’s go find Ninny.”

The Infernal Realm. The Jadenfloat Continent. Jingen Prefecture. The city of Bayfay [Bei’fei].

The streets of Bayfay City. A man and a woman were walking side by side.

“Ninny, I’ve come out for the express purpose on a stroll with you. Smile, won’t you?” The man and woman were Salomon and his little sister, ‘Nisse’. Ever since that event at the volcano range, Nisse had believed Bebe to be dead, having perished after diving into that golden magma pool.

Bebe’s death had come as a tremendous blow to Nisse.

It had also caused her attitude towards her elder brother to change.

“Alright.” Nisse just responded with a single word of acknowledgement.

A passerby on the street was chatting with another person.

“That snyder recording really was exciting. It’s been so many years since I’ve seen supreme experts like that do battle. Wow. There were actually more than ten Seven Star Fiends, and six of them used Sovereign’s Might. And that Azure Dragon clan’s Elder named Linley, he killed five Seven Star Fiends by himself. Too terrifying!”

That year, when Linley had suffered an attack from those eight Elders, many people had recorded scryer recordings of the battle. The recordings of such an enormous battle very naturally spread very widely. Since Linley's name had been verified, it also spread with the battle.

In the past hundred years, it had finally spread from the Bloodridge Continent to the Jedefloat Continent.

Hearing this conversation, both Salomon and Nisse were stunned.

“Linley?” Nisse was stunned. She had always believed that Linley and Bebe had both died. “Someone of the same name?”

“Linley? Six people who used Sovereign's Might?” Salomon was stunned as well.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 57,

Dangerous

The contents of that conversation had simply been too stunning. More than ten Seven Star Fiends in a single battle, six of whom had used Sovereign's Might? This sort of group battle between supreme experts was simply too rare. Even if they occurred, scryer recordings of such battles would rarely spread out.

"How could it be Linley?" Salomon was completely stunned.

But from the contents of that conversation, Salomon had learned that the 'Linley' these people were discussing as a member of the Azure Dragon clan. The Linley which he knew was also a member of the Azure Dragon clan! "Can it really be him?" Salomon didn't dare believe it. "He was just a God. How could he kill five Seven Star Fiends? No way. No way!!!"

A single person, kill five Seven Star Fiends? This sort of accomplishment was simply too terrifying.

As Salomon viewed it, no matter how powerful Linley was, there was no way he could've reached such a level.

"Big Bro, did you hear that? They said 'Linley'!" Nisse turned to look at her elder brother, Salomon. Her eyes were filled with disbelief. At the same time, a hint of hope appeared in her heart...

She had believed that both Linley and Bebe had died.

But Linley was alive. Bebe, perhaps, was still alive as well! When she thought of the possibility that Bebe was alive, her heart, dormant for a thousand-plus years, began to come to life again.

"They might just be two people of the same name." Salomon chuckled, intentionally saying disdainfully, "You know how strong our Linley was. He was just a God. It would be hard for him to face even an ordinary Highgod. Kill five Seven Star Fiends by himself? Do you believe it?"

Nisse was stunned.

"Alright. Don't pay any attention to the idle chatter. Most likely, it's just a supreme expert who also shares the name Linley." Salomon laughed calmly. "Let's go. We're shopping for clothes today. Pick whatever you like."

Salomon didn't want Nisse to go look at the scryer recordings. It wasn't an issue if it wasn't Linley, but if it really was Linley...given Nisse's temperament, she would definitely immediately go look for Bebe. That would be terrible.

"Let's go look at scryer recordings." Nisse said.

Salomon shook his head. "Why look at scryer recordings? What? Do you think Linley is still alive?"

"I don't know...but regardless of whether or not it is the Linley we know, a scryer recording of a battle including more than ten Seven Star Fiends is worth watching, no matter what." Nisse turned and immediately walked away.

Salomon had no choice but to follow, and he secretly consoled himself, “That Linley died long ago. And he was very weak! This supreme expert, in turn, is very strong. It definitely isn’t him. It has to just be someone with the same name!” Salomon had unjustly accused Linley in the past. Naturally, he didn’t want to see Linley grow strong.

There were three locations in Bayfay City that were dedicated to viewing scryer recordings.

Large groups of people were gathered in front of the gates of all three locations today, all of them handing over strips of inkstone and azurite to go in and watch the scryer recordings. By the time Salomon and Nisse arrived, they were shocked by how many people were present.

At the same time, those who had finished watching the scryer recordings were coming out from a side door.

“Truly astonishing. That Azure Dragon Elder was simply too terrifying!”

“Right. That azure prison of the Azure Dragon Elder appeared, and when it vanished, all of the enemy Elders were dead!”

Listening to this discussion, Salomon and Nisse felt all the more curious. They immediately handed over the entrance fee of a hundred inkstones and entered. There were six halls for viewing scryer recordings.

“Go to hall number five. The last viewing just completed, and will start anew soon.”

Salomon and Ninny both entered the fifth hall, looking for places to sit. The number of people within the fifth hall rose rapidly, but Nisse just stared at the front of the hall, her body trembling slightly.

“Ninny, relax.” Salomon said consolingly. “Don’t have too much hope.”

But Ninny didn’t say a single word.

Suddenly....

A large amount of water-type elemental essence coalesced in the front of the hall in mid-air, transforming into a recording. At the same time, a voice rang out. “Everyone, this battle occurred in Indigo Prefecture, at the Bloodridge Continent, in a mountain forest that was a few thousand kilometers outside of Meer City.

Everyone in the hall fell silent.

The explanatory voice continued, “These battling experts are eleven Seven Star Fiends! Based on my calculations, in Indigo Prefecture, only the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans have such a high number of experts. The two just so happen to be in a state of war...and now, everyone, please watch. When the scryer recording started, a Seven Star Fiend had already died, and his corpse is on the ground, still emanating the aura of Sovereign’s Might. Everyone, if you look carefully, you can see it.

After speaking, the recording in the front of the main hall began to play.

Everyone in the hall went silent. Ninny and Salomon held their breaths as well.

Within the enormous scryer recording, one battle scene after another appeared; these were the scenes of Phusro and Tewila battling their enemies. However, just by watching these two battles, the people watching this recording for the first time were already stunned.

Their bodies were all covered with light, and with each punch and kick, space itself split open.

“Three of these four are using Sovereign’s Might!” Salomon was stunned.

“Where is Linley?” Nisse was searching desperately. “And Bebe?”

However, at present, the scryer recording was primarily focusing on these two battles. At the same time, the scryer recording also recorded gray-robed corpse that lay on the ground, also emanating that aura. It was the Seven Star Fiend who had been killed by Phusro at the very beginning.

And then...

The scryer recording switched the point of view to the ground. The ground was roiling like the waves of the sea. Moments later, the ground suddenly exploded, and someone suddenly charged to the skies, blood matting his scales...but Nisse and Salomon were both shocked.

Those ferocious spikes, that tail, those dark golden eyes...they were so familiar!

Afterwards, five Seven Star Fiends pursued and attacked Linley. Linley's body was emanating that blue light; it was water-type Sovereign's Might. As for the five Seven Star Fiends behind him, one of them was emanating a black aura.

“It is Linley!” Nisse felt excited in her heart.

“This...” Salomon was stunned as well.

They had both seen Linley's Dragonform.

“Big Bro, it's Linley, it's Linley.” Nisse could no longer suppress her excitement, and her divine sense reached out again and again to Salomon. “It's definitely him. There's no mistake.”

“Nisse, that's not necessarily the case.” Salomon tried to equivocate through divine sense. “The Azure Dragon clan has many people, and their Dragonform appearances are all quite similar. In addition, in a thousand years, do you think Linley would become so powerful? It's impossible.”

Nisse was stunned. Could it be true that there was someone with a Dragonform similar to Linley's?

Nisse didn't know too much about the Four Divine Beasts clan, and didn't understand how unique Linley's Dragonform was.

And then, Salomon and Nisse continued to watch. In the scryer recording, Linley began to go insane, actually using his spiked forehead to batter a Seven Star Fiend to death. The other four remaining Seven Star Fiends wanted to flee, but they were all trapped within that massive blue cube.

After the blue cube vanished, the four Seven Star Fiends were dead as well.

The scryer recording was focused on Linley now, and after killing those four Seven Star Fiends, Linley actually flew to the ground. The recording showed how Linley knelt down by the side of a woman who was lying on the ground.

The recording clearly captured the image of that woman's appearance.

“Delia!!!” Nisse's eyes instantly turned round.

“It is Delia!” Salomon was stunned as well.

And then, in the scryer recording, Linley returned to his human form, clutching his infant child by his wife's side. Phusro and Bebe walked over as well, also entering the recording zone.

“Linley, Bebe!!!” Nisse instantly felt so overjoyed that her head went numb.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe; the three of them were all within the recording range.

There was no question about it! This mighty Azure Dragon clan Elder was that Linley which they had met.

“How can this be? How is this possible?” Salomon didn’t dare to believe it, but the truth was plainly visible for anyone to see.

“Big Bro, it really is them. It really is them. They didn’t die, didn’t die!” Nisse excitedly sent through divine sense. The sryer recording was almost over now. Linley took Delia in his arms while Phusro held the infant, and the two flew away side by side.

The sryer recording ended!

“That Azure Dragon clan Elder, based on the descriptions of the person who made this sryer recording, is named Linley. The woman on the ground should be a family member of Elder Linley’s. That woman died, which is why Elder Linley was so grief-stricken.”

Salomon and Nisse walked out to the street. Nisse’s face was filled with irrepressible excitement.

“Big Bro, they didn’t die, they really didn’t die.” In the past thousand years, Nisse had never been as happy as she was now. “Bebe is still alive. Still alive!”

“Right. This is good news.” Salomon responded.

But Salomon’s mind was currently in a state of chaos. Originally, he had mistakenly believed that Linley had exposed his secret, and thus in his rage had wanted to kill Linley. Afterwards, Linley and his wife had both plunged into that golden magma pool. But who would have imagined...

That Linley not only was still alive, he had become so very powerful!

“But what happened to Delia?” Nisse said, rather worried. “Did Delia die in that sryer recording?” Nisse still clearly remembered how, in the sryer recording, Linley had let out that howl of grief and rage by Delia’s side.

Although Nisse couldn’t actually hear any sound, she could already sense his agonizing grief just from watching.

“Big Bro!” Nisse suddenly said.

“Eh?” Salomon looked towards her. Nisse looked at Salomon. Determinedly, she said, “Big Bro, I have decided...I am going to the Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent!”

“Nonsense.” Salomon couldn’t help but grow impatient. This was exactly what he feared. “Ninny, going from the Jadefloat Continent to the Bloodridge Continent is no joke. How would you, a God, make it there? It is too dangerous. Unacceptable. Completely unacceptable!”

Nisse just glanced at her elder brother, not saying another word. She had already made up her mind. She was just letting her elder brother know of her decision.

Seeing the look on his little sister’s face, Salomon grew frantic.

“Ninny, you are too weak, and to go from the Jadefloat Continent to the Bloodridge Continent, you have to pass through the sea...the trip truly is too dangerous.” Salomon said frantically.

“It’s pointless for you to say anything.” Nisse wasn’t going to listen to her elder brother this time.

Salomon, seeing how his sister was acting, felt helpless in his heart. They were within the city, and within the city, there was no way he could possibly act to imprison his little sister. If his little sister truly wanted to go, there was nothing he could do about it at all.

“Ninny, are you really going to make me worry about you like this??” Salomon said, worried. “How about this. Train to the Highgod level, then go!”

Nisse glanced at him, not saying anything.

Nisse had already made up her mind, and there was nothing Salomon could do about it. Although Salomon kept a careful watch on her after the day they viewed the sryer recording...the next month, Nisse left.

Within his room.

Salomon stared at a piece of paper. It was a letter which Nisse had left him.

“Alas!” Salomon threw the paper to the table hatefully. “The journey from the Jedefloat Continent to the Bloodridge Continent will be so dangerous...why won’t Ninny listen?”

Salomon was frantic, but there was nothing he could do. He didn’t even know where Nisse had gone.

As he thought of this, Salomon couldn’t help but somewhat blame Linley. It was because he had wrongly accused Linley and Bebe that the relationship between himself and Nisse had fractured, and he rarely would be able to see her smile these days. And now, this time...she left on her own.

“How is it that Linley didn’t die, and instead became so powerful?” Salomon couldn’t understand it either. How had Linley risen to such a level?

At the same time that Nisse departed from Jingan Prefecture, Linley and Bebe, in the distant Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent, were living peaceful lives in the Skyrite Mountains. In the blink of an eye, a few decades passed.

“Linley!” A deep voice rang out.

“Father, Father!” Wade called out. “The Second Elder is looking for you.”

Linley walked out from within his room. From the corner of his eye, he saw that in the distant, the Second Elder was walking over with a very complicated expression on his face. “Linley, come. Our Four Divine Beasts clan is about to hold a joint Conclave of Elders.”

“Now?” Linley was rather surprised. “It hasn’t been a thousand years yet. In addition, the four Divine Beast clans, hold a joint Conclave?”

“Right! It will be in Bloodbath Gorge, at the Palace of the Four Divine Beasts.” The Second Elder sighed. “This time, the reason why all the Elders are being summoned is to discuss what our Four Divine Beasts clan should do with respect to the eight great clans.”

Linley’s heart trembled. “It seems though the clan is finally unable to keep fighting like this!”

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 58,

Unwillingness

The Skyrite Mountains. Bloodbath Gorge. The Palace of the Four Divine Beasts.

When Linley entered alongside the Second Elder into the palace, he saw that quite a few people had already arrived. Linley swept them with his gaze. “Including me, a total of forty two Elders!” But of course, as time passed, more Elders entered, one by one.

“Linley.” Elder Garvey had a good personal relationship with Linley, and so he walked over. “The clan leaders are finally willing to lower their heads.”

Linley was stunned. “Garvey. Are you saying...?”

Garvey let out a low sigh. “Last month, our Four Divine Beasts clan suffered yet another severe setback. The clan leaders primarily aren’t able to endure it any longer either. Thus, they organized this Conclave. Or perhaps the clan leaders are also irresolute and so they wish the Elders to come discuss it. If the Elders agree, then...”

Linley understood as well.

Once the Conclave concluded, most likely the Four Divine Beasts clan would choose to turtle up within the Skyrite Mountains, no longer leaving. Although by doing so, the Four Divine Beasts clan would be able to preserve its strength, the reputation of the clan, built up over countless years, would suffer a huge blow.

To the many clansmen, the honor of the clan was more important than life itself. This was a hard choice for the four clan leaders to make.

“We suffered a severe setback last month? What happened?” Linley hurriedly asked.

“You never pay attention to anything!” Garvey shook his head. “A month ago, our Four Divine Beasts clan lost another three Elders. One of the Elders belonged to our Azure Dragon clan. Factoring in the last event twenty years ago...our Azure Dragon clan has only fifteen Elders who truly possess the power of Seven Star Fiends.

Linley’s heart couldn’t help but clench in worry.

“Rumble...” The main door to the palace slowly slid closed.

Linley couldn’t help but feel startled. Garvey said in a low voice, “The Elders are all here. Soon, the four clan leaders will arrive.” Linley took a careful look about. In the hall, there were a total of fifty three Elders, including the Grand Elder.

From a side room, four figures walked out in a line, sitting down together at the front of the palace. It was Gislason and the other clan leaders.

The entire hall immediately fell silent for a time.

Gislason and the other three clan leaders swept everyone with their gaze, then looked at each other. In the end, it was Gislason who spoke. His deep, rumbling voice echoed in the hall. “Everyone, today, we have invited all of you over. I trust that all of you have already guessed what the purpose of this meeting is!”

As soon as these words came out, everyone felt misery in their hearts, and even Linley felt a surge of grief.

They no longer had the strength to save the situation!

“Ever since our four ancestors died, our Four Divine Beasts clan has suffered one heavy setback after another. Fortunately, thanks to the assistance of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, we were able to find out footing here in the Skyrite Mountains. Otherwise, our Four Divine Beasts clan would most likely have been turned into ash and disappeared like smoke, more than ten thousand years ago.

The palace was completely silent.

“Over the past ten thousand years, the Elders of our Four Divine Beasts clan have all fought fearlessly against the enemy for the sake of the glory of the clan. Ten thousand years ago, our Four Divine Beasts clan had a total of over two hundred Elders! But today, we only have fifty three remaining! It has only been ten thousand short years, but we’ve lost nearly two hundred Elders! Two hundred!!!” A moist light flashed in Gislason’s eyes.

The Elders below, thinking back to the other Elders who had perished over these years, all felt grief in their hearts.

Linley, as well, thought of the various members of his own Squad Thirteen who had died, as well as the forlorn image of Elder Arhaus, who had lost his most powerful clone.

For the sake of the clan, far too many Elders had sacrificed their most powerful divine clones. They had previously been Seven Star Fiends, lofty and mighty individuals. But after having lost their most powerful divine clones, they were now perhaps just ordinary Highgods.

“All these years, the other three clan leaders and I have been pondering...how long will we hold out for?” Gislason’s voice was hoarse. “Especially in the past few centuries. The eight great clans seem to have gone insane. They want to kill our Elders at all cost, even if they have to die with us. According to this current rate, in another few years, our Four Divine Beasts clan will most likely not have many Elders left.”

The Vermillion Bird Matriarch spoke out as well. “Right. One month ago in particular, we lost another three Elders! We four clan leaders have discussed this carefully...if this continues, we will only be able to endure for a few more centuries at most.”

The White Tiger Patriarch spoke out in a cold voice. “Since even if we continue to hold out, the only result will be that everyone will die, what’s the point?”

The Black Tortoise Patriarch rumbled, “This is why we wish to make sure that at least some of our elites will survive. After all, it isn’t so easy for someone to become a Seven Star Fiend and an Elder.”

Gislason said in a strong, forceful voice, “And so, we four clan leaders are united in agreement that we are to no longer fight against the eight great clans...all of the members of the clan are to enter the Skyrite Mountains. We will build up our strength!”

The Elders below were all stunned.

They had thought that the clan leaders would let them discuss this matter and vote on it, but who would have thought that this came as a simple declaration?

“Patriarch!”

“Matriarch!”

Instantly, quite a few Elders grew frantic.

“Patriarch!” A rushed voice rang out, and a youth with silver hair and a callous-looking face raised his head towards the four clan leaders. He frantically said, “Are we supposed to just surrender, just like that? Just admit defeat?”

Linley glanced at this silver-haired, callous-looking youth. It was the ‘Genius Elder’ of the Azure Dragon clan, Elder Blue.

“You can consider it as us admitting defeat!” Gislason no longer had the imposing, majestic aura that he previously always had.

“Blue.” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch looked down at him. “Even if we continue to fight, how much longer will the forces of our Four Divine Beasts clan be able to hold out for? Can it be that you want the remaining, final fifty three Elders of the clan to also be lost?”

Blue’s gaze was unyielding.

“Four clan leaders!” Blue raised his head slightly. “I, Blue, have submitted and surrendered to others, but that was because I was too weak. Ever since I became a Seven Star Fiend, I have never surrendered to anyone. The eight great clans are worthless! When our Four Divine Beasts clan was in the height of our power, they didn’t dare to oppose us in the slightest. But now? Hmph. Have me, Blue, surrender to them? Never!”

“Blue!” Gislason felt heartsick.

In their hearts, they not only hated the eight great clans, they also looked down on them. For them to surrender...they naturally didn’t wish to, given their pride. But Gislason and the other three were acting in the best interests of the clan.

“Patriarch, I understand that this is a hard decision for you. But I am just a single person. I am willing to go out and do battle...and to die on the field of war! After I die, the Infernal Realm will no longer have the Seven Star Fiend Blue, only the ordinary Highgod Blue. By that time, even if I want to do battle, I wouldn’t have the ability to.” Blue laughed softly as he spoke.

Linley, hearing this, couldn’t help but tremble.

At this moment, a black-haired Elder stood out and said in a somber voice, “Patriarch, for our clan to flourish again, what we need is a supreme expert like Beirut or Dunnington. I know that I have no more hopes for improving...I hope that you will let me go die in battle, Patriarch! Even if we lose, I refuse to let those eight great clans get off lightly.”

“Patriarch, in my life, I’ve given many things a try, but lowering my head? Never! Not even in death!” Yet another Elder stood up.

“Matriarch...”

Linley watched this scene quietly. Although to ordinary people, these Elders might appear to be too rigid and inflexible, Linley understood...these Elders had lived for countless hundreds of millions of years.

They weren't afraid to sacrifice themselves, but they cared deeply about certain beliefs and values which they held.

Fifty three Elders. Amongst them, there were more than twenty who were willing to sacrifice their most powerful divine clones, just for the sake of making the enemies suffer. The other Elders were silent, but Linley knew that so long as the clan leaders gave the order, they wouldn't hesitate in the slightest.

"Linley!" Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Linley was stunned.

The Grand Elder was looking at him, her eyes filled with panic. "Linley, you are on very close terms with the Lord Prefect. Can't you just...discard your pride and go beg the Lord Prefect for him to help us? Given the Lord Prefect's power, he is more than strong enough to force the eight great clans away. Linley, go beg him...for the sake of the clan, go beg him, just this once!"

Quite a few Elders immediately looked towards Linley.

Just now, these Elders had been in a state of despair, and many of them had been willing to throw away their most powerful divine clones in an attempt at vengeance. Even if their clan was submitting, they would make the eight great clans suffer. But hearing the words of the Grand Elder...

It seemed as though they had one last straw to clutch at for survival!

"I..." Linley didn't know how to respond.

"Little Sis." Gislason, seated at the front of the hall, let out a deep shout. "Having Linley would just make the Lord Prefect feel awkward. The Lord Prefect has already done many things for our Four Divine Beasts clan, and he has never asked for anything in return. You actually want the Lord Prefect to intervene yet again? Can it be that you think the Lord Prefect has an obligation to help us?"

The Grand Elder couldn't help but fall silent.

"We're able to preserve the clan, and it won't be destroyed. We should know when to be content with what we have." Gislason let out a sigh.

The Elders below all fell silent.

"Elders, I am unable to forcibly prevent any of you from deciding whether or not you wish to go do battle with the enemy. I just want to say...let the clan preserve a bit of power." Gislason rose after speaking, then looked towards Linley. "Linley, no matter what, don't go beg the Lord Prefect."

Linley couldn't help but raise his head and look towards Gislason.

"I know what sort of temper the Lord Prefect has. If we go too far and anger him by our actions...he doesn't even need to personally do anything. All he needs to do is to stop caring about our Four Divine Beasts clan and allow those eight great clans to freely attack us. That...would be disastrous!"

Quite a few Elders seated below, upon hearing those words, felt their hearts tremble.

Whether or not to surrender and submit, that was a question of the clan's honor and glory.

But angering the Lord Prefect...that was a question of the clan's survival. If the entire Four Divine Beasts clan was eradicated, there would no longer even be a question of honor or glory.

Ever since that decision was made, the Four Divine Beasts clan no longer openly battled against the eight great clans. Even though the forces of the eight great clans continued on their predetermined patrol routes and acted provocatively, they were ignored.

The clan only needed to preserve its strength.

But although this was the order of the clan, there were still quite a few Elders who weren't willing to accept it. They chose to go out to fight, causing the battles with the eight great clans to rise to a new crescendo...and the eight great clans, seeing that the Four Divine Beasts clansmen dared to act so brashly, couldn't help but feel enraged and send even more people out.

A wild, savage, brutal war!

The most eye-catching of them all was the Genius Elder, Blue. Elder Blue travelled by himself, and he actually managed to kill eight enemy Elders. Afterwards, the eight great clans were enraged, and they actually sent out one of their Patriarchs, along with multiple experts.

In that battle...

Elder Blue's most powerful divine clone...died!

Elder Blue, in those ten short years, accomplished the feat of killing nine enemy Elders.

But of course, although some did well, others did poorly. Other Elders went out to do battle as well, but some Elders weren't able to kill anyone at all, as they were set upon by many others or were killed by enemies using Sovereign's Might.

This sort of wild slaughter persisted for thirty years.

Twenty two Elders lost their most powerful divine clones in battle! As for the eight great clans, their losses were even greater. Thirty eight of the Elders perished. After all, the Four Divine Beasts clansmen were fighting with the intention of killing as many as they could in exchange for their own lives.

But after that, the Four Divine Beasts clan went silent, no longer seeking out battle.

For a short period of time, this actually threw the eight great clans into a period of wild speculation. After all, in thirty short years, they had lost thirty eight Elders, causing some shock to the eight great clans...after all, the Elders of their clans were the elites of their clans as well.

They, too, felt heartache at the losses!

The Skyrite Mountains returned to calmness. The roving patrols continued their patrols, but normally, very few people would come to the Skyrite Mountains. But today, a female youth flew out from a metallic lifeform.

Afterwards, that metallic lifeform flew away, while that young lady drew closer and closer to the Skyrite Mountains.

"These are the Skyrite Mountains. Outsiders are forbidden entry." Immediately, more than ten patrolling warriors flew over from above, and one of them shouted at her.

This young lady had her hair tied into a ponytail, and she appeared very attractive. The strange thing was, she was wearing a straw hat on her head. The young lady hurriedly replied, "Hello. I am the friend of your Elder Linley. I've come to find him!"

“Elder Linley?” The patrolling warriors were all puzzled.

“Do you have any proof?” A patrolling warrior asked.

“Uh...” The young lady hesitated. What proof could she provide? But then, she immediately said, “How about this. Just go tell Elder Linley that my name is Nisse. He’ll know who I am.”

“Nisse?” The leader of the patrolling warriors glanced at her, then nodded. “Wait here.” After speaking, he flew away.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 59,

Suspicion

Although life within the gorge was peaceful, Linley's heart was not at peace. He had continually been paying attention to Elder Blue and the others. These Elders all had chosen to sacrifice their most powerful divine clones for the sake of one last act of defiance. After hearing of their accomplishments in battle, Linley's blood couldn't help but boil, while at the same time, he felt rather saddened.

“Power. The problem, in the end, is still that our power is inferior to theirs!” Linley stood in front of his room, staring towards the sky, sighing in his heart.

From the Yulan continent to the Infernal Realm, Linley had experienced many things. Naturally, he understood that honor and glory wasn't something which others would 'give' you; it was something you had to fight for and obtain for yourself by relying on your own power! The Four Divine Beasts clan was much weaker than before now, but they still wanted to have as much glory as they had in the past? This was nothing but a dream!

When you had power, others naturally would revere you.

For example, Beirut. He alone was enough to strike terror into the hearts of the eight great clans. A single order from Beirut resulted in the eight great clans not daring to make a single incursion into the Skyrise Mountains!

The Four Divine Beasts clan was in dire straits. Linley, in his heart, wanted to help his clan, but his current level of power was a good deal weaker than Patriarch Gislason. How was he supposed to help the clan? The final conclusion of all that pondering was...Linley still wasn't strong enough.

“How long will it take for me to train to Lord Beirut's level?” Linley's heart was filled with desire...but then he shook his head and laughed.

Beirut and Dunnington could both be said as having reached the very peak of Highgod power. To reach the same level as Beirut was too hard!

“Once I train to the Highgod level, my power should begin to approach the Patriarch's.” Linley was rather eager. Once he became a Highgod, although his body would still be physically weaker than the Patriarch's, Linley had his Blackstone Prison.

If a Highgod Linley was to use the Blackstone Prison, the power of the technique would be very close to the level of the technique used by Purgatory Commander Reigem. Only then would the true power of the Blackstone Prison be put on display!

Linley turned to look towards a nearby area. Bebe was lying on the grass.

“Bebe, what are you doing?” Linley laughed.

“Sky watching.” Bebe lay there, not moving at all. His gaze was focused on the skies. Through the mist, he could see the winding Dragon Avenue.

Bebe would often lie there and stare dumbly at one place, or perhaps at his straw hat. Occasionally, he would go out and have fun with others, but given how well Linley knew Bebe, he understood how Bebe was truly feeling. As more time passed...

Bebe longed for Nisse all the more.

“Bebe.” Linley walked over, sitting on the grass as well, laughing as he looked at Bebe. “Are you thinking about Ninny?”

Bebe was slightly startled, but he still nodded lightly. “Right. I...kind of can’t keep myself from thinking of her. Whenever I’m not focusing on something, I’ll begin to think random, foolish thoughts, at which point I’ll often think of her. However, what’s the point of thinking? Ninny thinks I am dead.”

“Bebe, in a little while, once you become a Highgod, or perhaps once I become a Highgod...let’s make a trip to the Jadedfloat Continent.” Linley said.

“Whoah!” Bebe immediately sat up, turning to stare at Linley in shock.

“What, you don’t want to go?” Linley laughed.

Bebe had a rather awkward look on his face. “Boss, this is a rather complicated subject. I...do somewhat want to see her. But think about how her elder brother Salomon treated you. Treated us. If Phusro hadn’t shown us mercy, you and Delia would most likely be dead.”

Linley and Delia truly had nearly died, back then.

If they truly had died, Salomon would indeed have been the instigator and cause of their deaths.

“Whenever I think of Salomon, my belly fills with rage.” A savage light flashed in Bebe’s eyes, but then he said resignedly, “Tell me, if I go see Ninny, if I see Salomon, what should I do?”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh. So this was what sticking in Bebe’s craw, eh?

“No matter what, Bebe, in the end, Delia and I are still alive. In addition, the person you like is Nisse, not her elder brother. Just ignore her elder brother.” Linley urged.

“Ignore? Do you think I’ll be able to ignore him just because you said so?” Bebe pursed his lips resignedly.

Linley suddenly turned to stare towards the skies. A patrol warrior was flying towards him, and as he saw Linley on the ground below, he immediately landed next to Linley. Bowing, he said, “Elder Linley. There’s a woman at the borders of the mountains. She says that she is your friend. Her name is Nisse, and she wants to see you!”

Linley was stunned.

“Nisse?” Bebe immediately stood up, his eyes huge and round. He hurriedly said, “You said that woman is named Nisse, right?” “Right.” The patrol warrior was rather annoyed.

“Tell me, what is she like? Anything special about her?” Bebe said.

The patrol warrior paused momentarily. Describe a woman? This was rather hard. But then, the patrol warrior noticed the straw hat which Bebe was holding. His eyes lit up, and he hurriedly said, “Right. That woman was also wearing a hat on her head that looked identical to yours.”

Bebe was so excited, his face instantly turned red.

Linley felt both extremely shocked and delighted as well. How did Nisse end up coming over here?

“Boss!” Bebe hurriedly turned to look towards Linley. “Quick, slap me twice. See if I’m in a dream or not!” Bebe’s mind was completely numb right now, and he felt as though his body was light and airy, as though he wasn’t completely in touch with reality.

Linley acted quite simply. “WHAP!” He landed a palm blow on Bebe’s shoulder, knocking him straight to the ground.

“Haha, I’m not dreaming, I’m not dreaming.” Bebe instantly crawled back up.

Linley, seeing that Bebe was so excited that he was beginning to tremble, sighed to himself. It had been many years since Bebe had been excited to the point of going crazy.

The outside activities drew Delia out from the room as well. As she walked out, she said, “What just happened?”

“Nisse came. Bebe and I are going to go welcome her.” Linley laughed, then he grabbed Bebe and immediately flew into the air.

“Nisse came?”

Delia was slightly shocked, but moments later, she recovered. “Ninny actually came all the way from the Jedefloat Continent?”

The base of the Skyrite Mountains. Nisse was constantly staring into the depths of the mountains, her heart filled with worry. “What if Bebe doesn’t want to meet me? Will Bebe and Linley still be angry at what had happened in the volcano range that time?”

Worried. Panicked.

Nisse knew that her elder brother had wrongly accused Linley, and even wanted to cause the deaths of Linley and the others.

“Haha, Nisse!” A clear voice rang out.

Nisse couldn’t help but turn her head to look, and as she did, she saw two familiar figures fly towards her, shoulder-to-shoulder. Bebe, like her, wore a straw hat on his head. When Bebe saw Nisse, his eyes immediately lit up, and he was so excited that his speed instantly rose to a new level.

“Swoosh!”

“Bebe!” Nisse excitedly flew over as well.

But just as he drew near her, Bebe’s body suddenly trembled and his speed lessened. But Nisse ignored everything, rushing straight over to Bebe, clutching him in her arms. “Wuuuu...wuuuu...I thought you wouldn’t want to meet me...wuuuu...” As she spoke, she actually began to cry.

Bebe opened his mouth a few times. In the end, his first words were...“Where is your elder brother?”

Hearing this, Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. Bebe actually asked such an awkward question?

Nisse’s body trembled, and she released Bebe. She stared into Bebe’s eyes, as though she wanted to learn something from them. “My brother is still in the Jedefloat Continent.” Bebe seemed to have realized

something, and in a low voice, he said, “This time...you came here by yourself? From the Jadedfloat Continent?”

“Right!” Nisse nodded lightly.

“I almost...I almost...almost never would have been able to see you again.” As she spoke, tears once more began to appear in her eyes.

Hearing this, Linley couldn’t help but suck in a cold breath. Nisse was just a God. From Jingan Prefecture of the Jadedfloat Continent to Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent required passing through the Starmist Sea. One could imagine what a difficult journey this was, but Nisse had actually come by herself.

“You...” Bebe was completely stunned.

He had thought that Salomon had escorted Nisse here. The uncomfortable feeling that had been present in Bebe’s heart instantly vanished.

“You...did you want to die?!” Bebe instantly took Nisse into his arms.

Nisse was crying so hard that both her eyes had turned red. But her face was filled with a beautiful, overjoyed smile. Linley just stood there to the side, beaming as he watched. He felt very happy for the two of them, that they were able to have a reunion like this.

“Haha, the two of you have been holding each other for some time now. Do you want to continue to allow all those patrol warriors to watch this little drama?” A while later, Linley finally spoke with a smirk. “Come. Let’s go back first.”

Only now did Nisse and Bebe come to their senses.

Their reunion after a thousand years...they had both been so excited that they hadn’t noticed the passage of time.

Time flowed on. Nisse and Bebe, having reunited, naturally wouldn’t separate again. Bebe changed, once more becoming full of jokes and laughter, and spent every day with a delighted smile on his face. He was so happy he could die.

But although life for Linley and Bebe was comfortable, the eight great clans were frustrated.

Within the main hall of the Boleyn clan.

Four Patriarchs as well as four Deathgod Golem ‘clones’ of four other Patriarchs were gathered together. This meeting of the eight great Patriarchs had just begun.

“In the past few decades, the Four Divine Beasts clan has actually turtle up and refuse to come out. No matter how our clans’ forces challenge and provoke them, they don’t respond at all. What’s going on? Can it be that the Four Divine Beasts clan is admitting defeat?” A deep voice rumbled out.

“Impossible.” A hoarse voice rang out. “Everyone should still remember how savage and insane those Four Divine Beasts clansmen were, thirty years prior to this. It won’t be so easy to make them turtle up and submit.”

“Patriarch Boleyn, that’s not necessarily the case.” A devilish voice rang out.

“Nether Serpent. In the past countless years, have the Four Divine Beasts clan ever submitted? Don’t think so simplistically.” Patriarch Boleyn’s hoarse voice rang out once more.

The Four Divine Beasts clan had always been arrogant, prideful, and unyielding. They had never submitted. This was the impression that the Four Divine Beasts clan had always given others, throughout the countless years. Because the arrogance of the Four Divine Beasts clan had already been deeply engraved into everyone's hearts, within a short period of time, there were quite a few members of the eight great clans who were unable to believe that the Four Divine Beasts clan would lower their heads and submit.

"As I see it, the Four Divine Beasts clan must be plotting something." A forceful, unyielding voice rang out. "Their recent reactions have been too bizarre. Everyone, it is best to be careful."

"Plot. What sort of plot could they have?" A high-pitched voice rang out.

"Enough, everyone." A gentle voice rang out. "For now, it doesn't matter whether or not the Four Divine Beasts clan has surrendered, or if they are plotting something. Let's wait a while and take a good look. After a century, we will know for sure...if they have submitted, or if they are plotting something."

"Right. I concur." Patriarch Boleyn said as well.

"I concur."

The hiding of the Four Divine Beasts clan, for a short period of time, caused the eight great clans to feel suspicious. However, once the Four Divine Beasts clan remained in hiding for a longer period of time, the eight great clans would be completely certain as to what the situation was, at which point, they had other options at hand.

The Skyrise Mountains. Within the gorge.

Today, the gorge was filled with the sounds of celebration and laughter. The surviving Elders of the clan, as well as the four clan leaders, and even many former Elders who had lost their most powerful divine clones had all gathered here on this day.

Because today...

Was the day of Bebe and Nisse's wedding. Even Beirut, Carolina, and Phusro had hurried over. Today, Bebe was dressed in a very sharp manner, and for once, he was very humbly and courteously greeting every single guest who came.

"Getting married is exhausting." Bebe secretly grumbled to the nearby Linley.

Linley couldn't help but laugh. Suddenly, he noticed that Beirut was walking over. "Your grandfather is coming."

"Haha..." Beirut weighed Bebe with his gaze, nodding in satisfaction. "You look proper today. But Linley, you and Bebe really are something. Bebe and Nisse have been together for a few decades now, but you didn't even tell me. You only notified me after arranging the wedding."

Linley could only chuckle.

Nisse had indeed been within the gorge for decades. Originally, Nisse and Bebe weren't even planning a wedding, but...just a few months ago, Nisse suddenly discovered that she was pregnant!

Bebe and Nisse were both stunned. Having a child while not married? They frantically discussed this matter, then they came to a decision...they had to get married right away!

The two of them immediately wanted to notify everyone. However, Beirut was simply too far away, which was why they had decided to get married half a year later!

Today was the day of the wedding, but Nisse was already quite a few months pregnant and had a big belly. Each time Linley thought of this, he couldn't help but want to laugh.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 60, A Major Event

The day of the grand wedding. The gorge was filled with the nonstop sound of laughter.

Due to having chosen to submit and to retreat, the four clan leaders had been feeling quite depressed. Today, they seized the opportunity to have a good celebration. Beirut and Carolina were very happy as well, and so they happily chatted and drank with the four clan leaders and the various Elders.

“Lord Prefect, congratulations!” Gislason raised his cup to Beirut.

“Haha.” Beirut laughed as he looked towards Gislason, then lowered his voice. “Gislason, your Four Divine Beasts clan has truly retreated, and will no longer do battle?” Beirut paid attention to the struggle between the two sides as well.

Gislason was startled. He nodded.

“How have the eight great clans reacted?” Beirut asked.

“No reaction yet.” Gislason shook his head. “Most likely, in the near term, they will be unable to believe that we have truly submitted.”

“Right.” Beirut nodded. “But you still need to be careful. Once the eight great clans realize that you have retreated, even though they won’t dare to invade the Skyrise Mountains, they will think of ways to take their revenge upon you nonetheless.”

Gislason said self-mockingly, “We’ve already decide to hide in the Skyrise Mountains and not come out. What more can they do?” Gislason’s words had an undertone of grief and desolation to them.

Beirut didn’t say anything else.

“Hey.” The nearby Carolina laughed. “Tell me, will that Nisse of Bebe’s give birth to a boy or a girl?”

“How should I know?” Beirut laughed. “However, I can guarantee that it won’t be a Godeater Rat!”

If both husband and wife were Godeater Rats, their children would definitely also be Godeater Rats. Unfortunately, throughout the countless planes, only Beirut and Bebe were Godeater Rats. Generally speaking, especially terrifying divine beasts were also especially rare.

For example, the Azure Dragon, the White Tiger, and even the Nether Serpent were all unique divine beasts. There was only an extremely low probability that if their descendants married each other, they might be able to produce a true divine beast. But the chances were too low, far too low. As for the likes of the Ba-Serpent and the Suanni Lion, there were quite a few of them spread throughout the countless planes.

The more powerful a divine beast’s innate ability was, the rarer the beast was as well.

Those with weak innate abilities would be more common.

In the blink of an eye, months passed. Within the gorge. Outside Bebe’s room.

Linley, Beirut, Carolina, and the others were all present. Delia and Nisse were in the room. Nisse was about to give birth. The most nervous, restless person present was, of course, Bebe.

“She’s giving birth. She’s giving birth!” Bebe stood outside the room, mumbling to himself while walking back and forth, completely unable to come to a halt.

“Bebe, just sit down.” Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

“How can I sit down?” The muscles throughout Bebe’s entire body were taut and quivering. He glanced at Linley. “Boss, I’m so nervous, my heart’s about to leap out of my body. You want me to sit? Ugh. Why isn’t it out yet? It’s been so long.”

Beirut laughed. “Bebe, Nisse just went in. It’s going to be a good while longer.”

Bebe had no choice but to endure it. Right now, the passage of every single second, to Bebe, felt very long and slow.

“Waaaaa!” Suddenly, a high-pitched sobbing sound rang out.

Bebe seemed to have been hit by lightning, and he stood there stupidly.

“Creaaak!” The door swung open, and Delia walked out. She glanced sideways at Bebe. “Bebe, why are you standing there like an idiot? Aren’t you going to go in?” Only now did Bebe come to his senses, and his body transformed into a blur, entering the room.

Delia laughed. “Bebe actually went numb.”

“When you were giving birth to Wade, Bebe was telling me I was too nervous. But he’s even more nervous than me!” Linley laughed.

Delia glanced at him grumpily. “Don’t be so smug. When Taylor and Sasha were born, I heard that you were so nervous, you were sweating everywhere. You, a mighty, venerable Saint-level expert. So nervous that you were sweating?”

Linley could only laugh awkwardly.

Moments later, Bebe and Nisse walked out from the room. Bebe was beaming so widely, his mouth threatened to split apart. He was holding an infant in his arms. Nisse was a human, and so her baby was naturally a humanoid as well. However, this infant....

Was like Gislason. Although it had the lineage of a divine beast, it wasn’t a true divine beast.

“Boss.” Bebe looked excitedly at Linley. “Look, this is my child. This is the child of me, Bebe! Haha...I, Bebe, have a child of my own as well!” Bebe was so excited, his entire body was shaking.

“Come, let me hold the child.” Beirut laughed.

“Right.” Bebe very carefully handed the child over to Beirut.

Beirut took a careful look at the child. “Oh, so it’s a girl. The lineage of the Godeater Rat in her veins isn’t bad. Still, to activate the divine beast lineage in her blood will be rather difficult.” Up till now, Beirut still had yet to find a perfect way to draw out the innate divine ability of his descendants.

The Four Divine Beasts clan had their ‘Ancestral Baptism’, allowing their descendants to possess the ability to Dragonform and even have the innate divine ability of a divine beast. But of course, the strength of the innate divine ability was connected to the purity of the lineage.

“Girls are good. Girls are good.” Bebe continued to beam, his lips wide.

Today he was simply too excited.

Bebe was a divine beast, the Godeater Rat. With such a monstrosly powerful innate ability, naturally he wouldn’t have too many progeny. For example, although Beirut had three sons, they were triplets; that was the only reason why he had three. After that one time, Carolina never gave birth to any more children.

As for Linley, although he wasn’t a divine beast and thus wasn’t restricted as tightly by the universe, Taylor and Sasha were a ‘dragon-phoenix’ pair of twins as well who were born together. As for Wade, he was only born after they came to the Infernal Realm.

From this day onwards, Bebe eagerly devoted himself to raising his daughter.

The skies were clear and the air was fresh. Linley walked out of his room, and as he did, he saw that in the distance, there was a young woman seated in the meditative position on a patch of grass, training. This young woman had black hair, and her skin appeared crystalline, like jade.

This was Bebe’s daughter, Ina [Yi’na].

“It will be very hard for Ina to even become a Deity.” Linley sighed to himself. Although Ina had the lineage of a divine beast, she wasn’t a divine beast, after all. As for Beirut, he did not yet have a method which would have the effect of the ‘Ancestral Baptism’.

For now, Ina had to rely on herself. This was why, despite having trained for over a century, Ina was just a Saint.

“Uncle Linley.” Ina’s clear voice rang out. She had already stood up, and her lively, agile eyes looked just like her father’s. “You seem to be in an excellent mood. Do you have good news?”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh, “Ina, good eye. Right. I made a breakthrough.”

“Oh?” Ina’s eyes immediately lit up. “In which Elemental Law?”

“Fire.” Linley didn’t hide it.

Linley improved the slowest in fire. Although he had trained in it for over a thousand years by now, by now, Linley had only mastered four profound mysteries. In addition, Linley hadn’t even gotten a basic understanding of the other two profound mysteries.

By comparison, as for water, in which Linley had only trained for six or seven hundred years, he had already reached the late stage in his fifth mystery.

As for the wind, although he had mastered seven profound mysteries, he hadn’t gain any insights into the last two at all.

He still trained fastest in the Laws of the Earth.

The Laws of the Earth had six profound mysteries. Linley had already trained to the ‘bottleneck’ level in ‘Vitality’; with but a final step, he would reach the level of Highgod. In addition, he had begun to fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength as well as the Essence of the Earth.

“One’s mentality really does have an impact on the speed of one’s training.” Linley said to himself.

“Uncle Linley, you are too amazing. Alas, I still haven’t become a Deity. In the entire gorge, I’m the only non-Deity. Last time, when I went to great grandfather’s place, everyone I saw was a Deity as well.” Ina said helplessly.

Beirut and Carolina both doted on Ina, and often invited her to visit them at their place.

“Don’t be dispirited.” Linley said consolingly. “When training in the Elemental Laws, one must be fully absorbed in pondering them and focus in training them. If you do that, you will improve. I have faith in you. You are much more patient than your father.”

“Right.” Ina nodded and laughed. “Father has no patience for training.”

“Hey, are you people talking about me?” A voice rang out from nearby, and Bebe walked out from his own room, staring at Ina. “Nana, are you saying bad things about me?”

Ina let out a lovable snort, turning her head and ignoring Bebe.

Bebe just rubbed his nose. “This kid isn’t as obedient as she used to be when she was young.”

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. He originally had thought that since Bebe had a daughter, she would become the center of attention. But he was wrong...even after having a daughter, Bebe remained the same.

“Rumble...”

A spatial tremble suddenly swept out.

Linley’s face changed. He couldn’t help but turn his head. Although the spatial tremble came from far away and was already very weak, Linley could still sense it.

“What just happened?” Bebe’s expression grew focused as well, and he looked towards Linley.

“What is it?” Delia, Nisse, and Wade ran over as well.

“Come. Let’s take a look.” Linley led the way, flying into the air. Immediately, Bebe, Delia, Nisse, Ina, and Wade all followed, but as they flew out of the gorge, Linley’s group saw...

“This...” Linley stared, slack-jawed.

In the southern skies of the Skyrise Mountains, the entire area was clustered with people, who flew about like a horde of locusts. Quite a few people were launching attacks towards the mountain forests below.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

Those tree trunks exploded, and crevices in the ground appeared. Those spatial tremors from earlier had been caused from these attacks. However, these people were quite careful; despite attacking downwards, their attacks didn’t actually cause any harm to the Skyrise Mountains at all.

“So many people?” Linley felt his heart turn cold.

“Uncle Linley, how many people are there? There must be at least a few hundred thousand.” Ina stared dumbly.

“Not just a few hundred thousand!” Linley muttered.

At this moment, it wasn't just Linley who felt his heart growing cold; throughout the Skyrite Mountains, members of the Four Divine Beasts clan were flying over, staring at the terrifying scene of countless people in the skies south of the Skyrite Mountains. Those people were currently attacking the mountain forests south of the Skyrite Mountains.

“Stay here. Don't move.” Linley shouted. “If there's any danger, immediately hurry back to the gorge. I'll go to see the Patriarch first.”

“Don't worry.” Bebe nodded.

Linley nodded slightly. He immediately flew at high speed towards the ‘dragon's head’, the end of Dragon Avenue. And not just Linley; a good number of Elders were flying towards the Patriarch's residence at high speed as well. On the way over, Linley met the Second Elder.

Linley saw Patriarch Gislason and some others in the distance. They, too, were looking towards the south.

“Patriarch.” Linley flew over.

“Linley, you came.” Gislason chuckled towards Linley. “Take a look and see the sort of game the eight great clans up to!”

“They really are the members of the eight great clans?” Linley had suspected this long ago.

“See for yourself.” Gislason turned his head to look towards the south.

Linley looked towards the south as well. Many experts were attacking the mountainous forests, and moments later, Linley understood as well. “They...they are setting up a foundation!” Within a large area, the trees were all destroyed, while at the same time, a solid foundation was being laid.

Soon...

Many of the clansmen belonging to the forces of the eight great clans came bearing giant stones, and they began to build one castle and estate after another! Given the power Deities possessed, especially when such an astonishingly large number of Deities worked together, in but half a day...

One castle and another was finished in the area to the south of the Skyrite Mountains.

The area in which these many castles were built was extremely close to the Skyrite Mountains. In addition, one could clearly tell that these castles were divided into eight areas.

Seeing this, the Four Divine Beast clansmen were stunned.

“What are they doing?” Elder Garvey couldn't believe it.

“What are they doing? Setting up house next to us!” Gislason said gloomily.

Suddenly...

“Cowards of the Four Divine Beasts clan!” A wild, savage sound echoed throughout the air above the Skyrite Mountains. “Haha, I didn't expect that the descendants of four Sovereigns would actually turtle up here in the Skyrite Mountains and be afraid to come out. Haha...”

All the clansmen living within the Skyrite Mountains heard this laughter.

All the clansmen were enraged.

“You fellows are quite good at hiding, aren’t you? Fine, then. Hide. Our eight great clans will just live right here next to you! As long as a single member of your clan exits the mountain, we will kill him or her! If you want, you can forever hide in there like cowards and never come out!”

“Haha...Four Divine Beasts clan? More like Four Pests clan! Haha...”

“Anyone with courage, step out. Our eight great clans will welcome you at any time! If you don’t have any courage...then just keep hiding!”

Waves of laughter continued to echo out from outside. Their voices shook the heavens like thunder, echoing within the Skyrite Mountains.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 61,

Group Battle

The countless members of the Azure Dragon clan who lived in the Skyrite Mountains all heard these insults and the mockery. Many clansmen were infuriated. Fierce looks flashed through their eyes, and they could no longer endure it. Bellowing, they flew out from throughout the Skyrite Mountains.

“Kill!”

“Kill these bastards!”

A large number of figures rose from within the Skyrite Mountains. Moving as fast as lightning, they wildly charged towards the south. Many of them were patrol guards. Many of them were so angry that their eyes had turned crimson, and quite a few other warriors charged towards the east as well.

They had gone mad!

The Four Divine Beasts clansmen had been enraged to the point of insanity! Being killed was nothing more than their severed heads falling to the ground, but the insults the other side was hurling caused these clansmen to go wild. Countless years of pride made it so that these tribesmen weren't able to endure it any longer.

“Bastards!” Elder Garvey, standing by Linley's side, was staring angrily, his eyes crimson as well.

They had elected to retreat, because they had realized the hopelessness of the clan's situation. But now, the enemy had come right up to them, cursing them out while pointing their fingers towards the Four Divine Beasts clansmen's noses. Everyone found it had to endure this. All of the Elders were growing utterly enraged. Even Linley, upon hearing the mocking laughter, felt fury rise in his heart. “These eight great clans are forcing us to go battle them!”

“Return! All of you, return!” Gislason roared loudly.

Those reproofing shouts echoed throughout the Skyrite Mountains, but many of the ordinary clansmen had never even met the Patriarch. In their rage, how could they possibly recognize their Patriarch's voice? They didn't care who was ordering them to stop; they still charged towards the south. All of them wanted to drink the enemy's blood and devour the enemy's flesh!

“Rumble...”

More than ten thousand clansmen filled the skies. They threw themselves towards the outside. Even though they were still quite some distance away, they attacked wildly, causing material attacks and spiritual attacks to instantly fill the heavens.

“Kill!” Many clansmen within the Skyrite Mountains who hadn't flown out yet attacked savagely as well.

“Rumble...”

The skies shone with all sorts of lights, which rushed towards the south in a wave.

“Rumble...”

The many clansmen of the eight great clans all unleashed their terrifying attacks. The color of the sky itself changed. The countless attacks clashed and intersected in mid-air, causing an ear-piercing, rumbling sound. Many attacks, however, passed through to the other side.

“Bang!” “Boom!”

The Four Divine Beasts clan. The eight great clans. The bodies of their clansmen exploded in mid-air or tumbled directly to the ground.

“Kill them!”

Their blood boiling, these enraged clansmen attacked, ignoring all else. However, because many of the clansmen had halted after being ordered to stop, only ten thousand or so had truly charged over. All of those clansmen who had charged over immediately Dragonformed. They would either kill their enemies, or they would themselves die!

The world shook with countless rumbles.

Surrounded like this, those clansmen who had originally elected to remain within the Skyrite Mountains felt their own rage rise as well. They weren't able to endure any longer. Even Linley felt a murderous intent rise in his heart.

“Quick, all of you, go stop our clansmen. Quick!” Gislason roared angrily towards Linley and the others. “They are just throwing their lives away!”

“Yes, Patriarch!”

Linley and the group of Elders were enraged, but all of them had no choice but to forcibly swallow their anger. They scattered everywhere throughout the Skyrite Mountains, loudly shouting, “Stop. All stop!”

“Stop. Stop!”

After all, it was the clan leaders and the Elders of the Four Divine Beasts clan who had made the decision to stop fighting against the eight great clans. The high level members of the clan knew, but the ordinary clansmen didn't know. The ordinary clansmen were as proud and arrogant as they had been, ten thousand years ago. They weren't able to endure this sort of humiliation.

Thanks to the shouts and roars of the Elders, as well as the shouts of the many patrolling warriors who were following the commands of the Elders, the insanity slowly began to fade away.

In that short while...

Tens of thousands of Four Divine Beasts clansmen had died. But of course, the losses of the eight great clans weren't light either.

“All of you, back!” Linley roared at one clansman after another.

Many of those clansmen had unwilling looks in their eyes, which were filled with rage. They all stared towards the south. After so many years, quite a few members of the Four Divine Beasts clan had gotten to know Linley. The prestige and authority of the Elders was still very effective. All of them thus refrained from charging over.

“Elder Linley, are we supposed to just take it without fighting back?” A youth looked at Linley frantically, his face completely red with rage.

Linley was stunned.

“Just let them ride roughshod over us. To just let them insult us like this?” The youth’s body was trembling. “I would rather die and take a few of them with me, rather than accept this sort of humiliation!” “Elder Linley...are we really not going to fight back?” Quite a few clansmen looked towards Linley, their eyes filled with a hint of despair.

Being insulted and cursed at by others, but not fight back? This was more agonizing to the Four Divine Beasts clansmen than killing them.

“We will have our revenge!” Linley growled. “Don’t worry. We will have our revenge!”

Only now did the clansmen feel slightly better. They all listened to Linley and began to return, but as Linley stared at the surrounding area...he saw that most of the infuriated clansmen had been stopped by his shout.

When Linley had just arrived at the Four Divine Beasts clan, he hadn’t felt too strong a sense of belonging towards the clan.

This was because, deep in Linley’s heart, he had always considered himself to be Linley Baruch! He had a very strong sense of belonging towards the Yulan branch, but that wasn’t the case for the Azure Dragon clan as a whole.

However...

Much time had passed. He had lived here with the Four Divine Beasts clansmen for eight or nine centuries. Over the past eight or nine hundred years, Linley had met too many of his clansmen, all of them who were capable of Dragonforming, and who would all greet him as ‘Elder Linley’ upon seeing him. Unconsciously, without even realizing it...in the Infernal Realm, Linley had already grown to completely consider himself a member of the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“The eight great clans!” Linley stared towards the south, his eyes narrowing.

And then, Linley flew back to the residence of Patriarch Gislason. But right at this moment, yet another wave of mockery and derisive insults rang out.

“Haha, what? Your Four Divine Beasts clan only has this much courage?”

“Just keep hiding. I daresay that even though the Four Divine Beasts clan has people at their very doorstep mocking them and insulting them, they still don’t have the courage to fight back. This news, without a doubt, will spread throughout the Infernal Realm in just a few centuries, and even the rest of the Higher Planes. Haha...we will make sure that the people of the various planes all know what cowards you Four Divine Beasts clansmen are. How spineless!”

The voices continued to echo in the skies.

The Elders had already returned to the side of Patriarch Gislason, all of them utterly enraged.

“I didn’t expect the eight great clans would be this despicable!” The Second Elder was so angry that even his beard was trembling. “When they spread this news throughout the other planes, the various clans will look down upon them as well.”

“Look down upon them?” Patriarch Gislason laughed coldly. “You are wrong. The eight great clans, when spreading this news, will definitely make it all the more colorful. They’ll say that it was the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture who forbade them from attacking the Skyrite Mountains, which is why they were forced to remain outside the borders of the mountain range. This news will perhaps enhance the reputation of the Lord

Prefect of Indigo Prefecture. It won't have much of an impact to the eight great clans. But to our Four Divine Beasts clan..."

Linley understood as well. Once this spread out, the reputation of the Four Divine Beasts clan would forever be tarnished. Others would say that all they were capable of was hiding behind the protection of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, and that even when others came to their gates to insult them, they still didn't have the courage to fight back!

"Patriarch Gislason of the Azure Dragon clan. You are a Patriarch and the son of a Sovereign, and yet you are so spineless and cowardly. You really are an embarrassment to your father. Why don't you just kill yourself? Haha..."

"You, Gislason, are an embarrassment to the almighty Sovereign. Haha..."

Laughter rang out continuously.

Even after the four Sovereigns died, these people wouldn't dare to casually besmirch the Sovereigns themselves. After all, even a dead Sovereign was still a Sovereign. The prestige of a Sovereign was inviolable...and if it was violated, if any of the other Sovereigns were to hear their words, be irritated by them, and decide to punish them, they would be doomed.

Gislason's gaze was like ice.

"Patriarch." The nearby Elders couldn't help but look at him.

"These bastards." Elder Garvey let out a growl, and he immediately transformed into a ray of light, flying towards the north.

"Get back here." Gislason's face changed. He immediately flew in pursuit, and Linley and the other Elders followed him.

Although Gislason was far faster than Elder Garvey, the Skyrite Mountains were only so large. By the time they caught up, Gislason and the others had already reached the borders of the Skyrite Mountains.

"Garvey. What are you doing?" Gislason grabbed Elder Garvey.

"Patriarch." Garvey stared at Gislason.

"Oh. You finally found the courage to come out?" Ten or so figures were hovering there in mid-air, and they glanced over. They clearly had noticed Gislason and the others. "Gislason, what are you doing? Not only are you not fighting back, you aren't going to let others fight back either? Haha..."

Gislason turned to look at them.

"And who the hell do you think you are?" Gislason's eyes radiated frost. "Let the Nether Serpent, Edric, and the others come over!"

The leader was a big fellow that was more than three meters tall. Snickering, he said, "Gislason, a hundred years ago, I might have asked the Patriarchs to come over upon hearing your words. Unfortunately...you are not nothing more than a coward who doesn't even dare to fight back. What right do you have to invite my Patriarch over? I feel ashamed just speaking with you!"

"Impudence." Gislason's face seemed to have been covered by ice.

"Bastard!" Garvey, furious, gnashed his teeth, charging forward once more.

“Hold it.” Gislason grabbed Garvey and shouted at him.

“Patriarch!” Garvey turned to look at Gislason, shouting angrily.

“Hey, kid.” The muscular fellow glanced disdainfully at Garvey. “From the looks of you, your rank in the Four Divine Beasts clan should be fairly high. But in all these years, in all the battles between our eight great clans and your clan, I’ve never seen you.”

Garvey’s body trembled.

Indeed. Over the many previous years, because Garvey was one of the slightly weaker Elders, he had never gone to Boodbath Gorge, nor had he fought on behalf of the clan. He had watched as the other Elders sacrificed themselves for the clan, and as he did so, he had always felt guilt in his heart.

“Patriarch. I, Garvey, am an Elder, but in all these years, I’ve never had the chance to do battle.” Garvey’s eyes were bloodshot, and he stared savagely at the Patriarch. “I imagine that in the future, I won’t have the chance to battle the eight great clans either. Today...just grant me my wish.”

Gislason was stunned.

“Elder Garvey...” Linley hurriedly spoke out as well.

“Garvey, don’t...” Gislason hadn’t even finished his words before Elder Garvey let out a low laugh.

“BANG!” Suddenly, a terrifying azure aura emerged from Elder Garvey’s body, and he immediately broke through Gislason’s grip as his body split into two. One was an ordinary divine earth clone, which remained. As for that body which was brimming with azure light, it seemed to have transformed into an illusory dragon, bellowing as it charged towards the south.

Sovereign’s Might!

“Retreat!” The face of that burly warrior changed dramatically.

The ten-plus people by his side had changed as well. They hurriedly scattered in each direction, while the leader let out a low growl. His own body became covered with an azure aura as well; this man was an expert of the Barbary clan, skilled in using water.

“Garvey...” Linley watched, stunned.

Garvey opened his mouth, and instantly, an enormous illusion of an Azure Dragon that was more than ten thousand meters long appeared. An enormous Dragon Roar shot out, immediately enveloping all of the ten-plus people who had wanted to flee. Their bodies stiffened, and they became paralyzed.

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

“Swoosh!”

Elder Garvey immediately scurried over, attacking those people who had been affected by the Dragon Roar in quick succession. “Bang!” “Bang!” Garvey only had the chance to kill two of them, before that man who had also used Sovereign’s Might interposed and blocked him.

The two experts began to battle wildly, exchanging multiple blows. Garvey’s thigh was torn open, and blood splattered everywhere. In terms of power, Elder Garvey was still quite a bit weaker than this muscular man of the Barbary clan.

“Patriarch, quick, save him!” Linley let out a low growl, and he charged forward as well. At the same time...

“BOOM!”

An earthen yellow light surged out from Linley’s body. It was a drop of earth-type Sovereign’s Might.

But right at this moment...

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

Six more figures flew out from the eight great clan’s forces, their bodies also radiating that terrifying, powerful aura of Sovereign’s Might. Clearly, they had come to jointly attack and kill Linley. Linley was by himself; how could he possibly overcome these six enemies?

Gislason’s face changed dramatically. He shouted loudly, “Quick, retreat!” At the same time, an azure aura burst forth from his body, and he too transformed into an azure ray of light, streaking through the skies.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 62, The Thorn in Their Side

Elder Garvey's battle against the enemy expert resulted in the aura of Sovereign's Might filling the area, causing the other three clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan to hurry over. When they saw those six figures simultaneously attack Linley, their faces all changed.

"Not good. All six of them are using Sovereign's Might, and two of them are Patriarchs!" The Vermillion Bird Matriarch recognized the enemy experts from far away.

"How can this be?! The eight great clans have gone mad!"

The White Tiger Patriarch, the Black Tortoise Patriarch, and the other Elders couldn't understand what they were seeing. No matter how powerful Linley was, he was just a Seven Star Fiend. How could he have angered the eight great clans to the point where without hesitating at all, six enemy members would immediately use Sovereign's Might to attack him, with two being Patriarchs!

Of the eight Patriarchs, seven were a Sovereign's Emissary, while the eighth was the most powerful of them all.

What sort of status did the eight of them have? And yet, two of them, not hesitating at all, immediately joined forces to shamelessly attack a junior like Linley? This was inconceivable!

"Linley, quick, flee!!!" A furious shout echoed in Linley's mind. At this moment, Linley also noticed out of the corner of his eyes that six enemy experts were attacking. He couldn't help but feel shocked. "Six? All using Sovereign's Might?"

Murderous looks were in the eyes of the six, and they looked like six tigers that wanted to devour a little lost sheep. "Haha, Patriarch, this Linley actually flew out of the Skyrise Mountains. This really is an opportunity which the heavens had gifted us with." An extremely muscular man whose entire body was covered with a white robe sent through divine sense.

"We have to seize this opportunity. We must kill him, no matter the cost!"

"He won't be able to run!"

The six stared at Linley fixedly. Over the past thousand years, their eight great clans had wildly attacked the Four Divine Beasts clan, precisely because they were afraid that that they might take too long and allowed Linley to become a Highgod. They wanted to force Linley out.

But...over so many years, Linley had never come out.

Linley's existence was a thorn in their side, a bone sticking in their craw. Even in their dreams, they dreamt of destroying this disaster waiting to happen. And now, today, heaven had given them the opportunity to do so! How could the six of them show any mercy? They didn't show mercy...

But as for Linley, he was no fool. He knew his own limits.

Seeing the six of them charge over, Linley hurriedly retreated while shouting frantically with divine sense, "Garvey, retreat!"

In the same instant as he hurriedly retreated, with Linley at the center, an earthen yellow light sprang out in waves, immediately extending to create an enormous spherical region with a diameter of five hundred meters. It immediately caught the distant Elder Garvey and his opponent, still locked in battle.

Blackstone Space!

The Blackstone Space was the ultimate technique of Reisgem. Today, Linley actually used earth-type Sovereign's Might to unleash this technique, which was an earth-type attack to begin with. Using earth-type Sovereign's Might to unleash it...the power of this Blackstone Space had been lifted to an unprecedented, powerful level.

The divine power of a God, when using this Blackstone Space, was capable of affecting weak Seven Star Fiends.

The divine power of a Highgod, when using this Blackstone Space, was capable of affecting even experts who were close to the rank of Asura; Reisgem's level.

But when using earth-type Sovereign's Might to execute this Blackstone Space...the enemy would have to use Sovereign's Might and also be a supreme expert in order to be able to resist it even slightly...as otherwise, within the Blackstone Space, there would be no way for them to fight back at all.

"Ahhh!" The Barbary clan's warrior who was battling against Elder Garvey, when affected by the gravitational pull, was caught off guard and sank down. In a battle between experts, the slightest flaw was enough to cause one's death!

"BANG!" Elder Garvey seized the opportunity to launch a palm slap against the head of the Barbary clan warrior, whose head exploded as a divine spark flew out.

The Barbary clan Elder had died!

But right at this moment...

"Swoosh!" Six figures charged straight into the Blackstone Space. The Blackstone Space was simply too large. If they wanted to kill Linley, they would have to draw close to him. Even though they knew how powerful the Blackstone Space was, they still had to charge in first.

But the power of the Blackstone Space was even greater than they had expected!

Blackstone Space – Repulsive Force!

The six figures that had been charging into the Blackstone Space suddenly slowed down. Caught off guard, two of the figures even were pushed backwards by the repulsive force of this Blackstone Space. They had charged straight in, but then suddenly were thrust out by the repulsive force. These two conflicting momentums caused their bodies to tremble, and their faces couldn't help but turn red. Just like that, they were injured.

This was the terrifying power of a supreme Blackstone Space!

"How is that possible?" The other four, although just barely able to resist from being repulsed outwards, were also slowed dramatically.

There was no way they would be able to catch Linley!

“Attack!” The leader, Patriarch Boleyn, roared through divine sense. At the same time, white, glowing wings appeared from his back, and a white, holy aura of Fate-type Sovereign’s Might emanated from his entire body. The expression on Patriarch Boleyn’s face was incomparably emotionless as he stared at Linley!

“Swish!” A semi-translucent white arrow pierced through the air, shooting towards Linley.

“Hmph!” A low growl.

A man with two icy blue eyes swung out his right arm, his blue eyebrows fluttering. A blue scimitar instantly shot out. The spatial fabric of the Infernal Realm was cut open like a piece of paper, wherever that blue scimitar sliced past.

If a blade was very sharp, when you sliced it through someone’s head, the only thing that would happen would be that a red line would appear.

This scimitar cut through space in the same manner; when it sliced through space, it just left behind a thin crack, one which was almost invisible if not examined carefully. However, the power of this scimitar had reached an astonishing level.

The white arrow and the blue scimitar shot out simultaneously.

“Hmph!” With but a thought, Linley suddenly made layers upon layers of earthen yellow walls appear out of nowhere, blocking in front of that white arrow and the scimitar. But the gliding speed of that scimitar was simply too fast; it was even faster than the white arrow, and it easily sliced through one wall after another.

Linley was shocked. “This scimitar...”

This earthen yellow wall was formed from earth-type Sovereign’s Might, and its defensive power was very terrifying. But this powerful defense, in the face of that scimitar, was like nothing more than wet paper, unable to block it in the slightest.

“Can it be a Sovereign artifact?” Linley continuously retreated.

“Whoosh!” The scimitar sliced through the air, and had already arrived in front of Linley. Only now did Linley clearly see...that as the scimitar slashed towards him, a neat cut in space itself could be seen at the edge of the scimitar. “Too fast. Too fast!” Linley wasn’t able to dodge at all.

Right at this fatal moment...

A black fist slammed down in front of Linley like a mountain. This enormous black fist lightly brushed past the scimitar. There was a clear, ringing sound, and the direction of the blue scimitar was changed. “Swish!” It slashed past Linley’s chest, effortlessly piercing past it.

“Quick, back!” That black hand snatched Linley, then dragged him backwards.

“Patriarch.” Linley saw from the corner of his eyes who this person was, and he felt gratitude in his heart. The person who had saved him was Patriarch Gislason.

The half-translucent white arrow was slightly slower than the ‘scimitar’, and it landed on Gislason’s body. Gislason didn’t seem to even notice it, nor did he counter-attack; he just grabbed Linley and flew back into the Skyrise Mountains.

Although this took time to describe, the time it took between Linley flying out, Elder Garvey killing his enemy, and then Linley and Gislason both fleeing back was nothing more than the time it took to blink one’s eye. But such a heart-palpitating series of events had occurred in that blinking of an eye!

The Skyrise Mountains.

Gislason and Linley both flew back. Only now did they let out sighs of relief. Elder Garvey had been lucky enough to flee back as well. In truth, the enemies had considered Linley to be their real target, and so Elder Garvey had seized the chance to flee back.

“Patriarch, thank you for saving my life.” Linley looked at his chest, terror flashing through his mind at what almost happened.

“You really are audacious.” Gislason let out a long breath, then looked towards the front. “Just now, the enemy actually sent out six people at once, all using Sovereign’s Might. Even I was shocked...in particular, the Patriarch of the Venna Clan even attacked with his weapon-type Sovereign artifact!”

Linley was shocked. That had actually been a Sovereign artifact!

“However.” Gislason laughed as he looked at Linley. “The power of your Gravitational Space truly is terrifying, especially after you used a drop of earth-type Sovereign’s Might. Those two weaker individuals, even after having used their Sovereign’s Might, were actually repelled outwards. As for Patriarch Boleyn and the other Elders, they weren’t able to chase after and attack us at all.”

Indeed!

After Linley set up his ‘Blackstone Space’, the enemies could only attack from afar; they weren’t able to pursue at all.

“Linley, thank you.” Elder Garvey, his face ashen, drew near and said gratefully.

“Linley!” A deep, rumbling voice echoed out. The Black Tortoise Patriarch, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, the White Tiger Patriarch, and a number of other Elders flew over as well. “What is going on? Why is it that as soon as you attacked, the eight great clans would suddenly attack you like mad? Even two Patriarchs joined forces. Is there some sort of huge enmity between you and them?”

Linley felt completely baffled as well.

“I don’t know either. I only fought for the clan on a few occasions and killed a few enemy Elders. Nothing else.” Linley stared into the distance. He didn’t understand why the eight great clans wanted to kill him this badly. Their madness had already reached an all-encompassing state, and they viewed him as the greatest thorn in their side.

“What a wonderful chance that was...” Patriarch Boleyn shut his eyes, unwilling to accept what had just happened.

“The two of you joined forces, and yet you still weren’t able to kill Linley. What a waste of a wonderful opportunity!” A cold, insidious man, dressed in voluminous black robes and with vipers hanging from his ears said in a low voice. “Patriarch Venna, how could you have missed with your blade?”

The man with the long, blue eyebrows let out a cold snort, not explaining.

“There’s no point to discussing this now.” A gentle voice rang out. Patriarch Edric. “What is done is done. What we now need to do is come up with a way...to find another chance to kill Linley. Linley’s Gravitational Space is simply astonishing. It isn’t so bad if he doesn’t use Sovereign’s Might, but once he does...only we Patriarchs have a chance to kill him.”

“It doesn’t matter who kills him. What matters is forcing him out to fight again.” A growling voice rang out.

“I’ll give it a try. Let’s see if I can force Linley out.” Suddenly, an elfin-looking Elder flew out.

The clan leaders and Elders of the Four Divine Beasts clan were all together. The actions of the eight great clans had caused them to be utterly enraged, but all they could do right now was to endure it. After all, the number of experts the enemies had was simply too overpoweringly greater.

“Boss, you were too rash.” Bebe hurried over as well.

Linley could only chuckle. “I didn’t expect that the eight great clans would attack me so madly.” Linley had thought that when he attacked, the enemy would at most send out a single Elder to stop him...and in that sort of situation, Linley was confident he would be able to save Elder Garvey. But the reaction of the enemy side was simply too astounding; even he was terrified by it.

Right at this moment, a mocking voice rang out from the other side.

“That should have been Elder Linley of the Azure Dragon clan just now, right? Oh, excuse me, the Azure Pest clan’s Elder. I had thought that you, Linley, were an impressive figure. But from the display you just put on, Elder Linley...haha, you really disappoint me!” The snickering laugh rang out. “I, an ordinary Elder of the Edric clan, am here right now. Elder of the Azure Pest clan, dare you fight me?”

This mocking laugh echoed throughout the Skyrite Mountains.

Azure Pest clan?

The Four Divine Beast clansmen were all enraged, and many stared hatefully at the enemy clansmen.

Linley couldn’t help but look towards the gray-robed, elfin-looking Elder. In his heart, he was pondering. “What is going on with the eight great clans? They want to make me step out and fight again? Why are they focused on me?” Linley felt that there was something amiss.

“Linley, don’t go.” Gislason immediately instructed.

“Hey...!” Bebe shouted loudly. “You claim to be eight ‘great’ clans? Just now, six of you attacked Linley, and two of you were Patriarchs. The eight great clans truly are great; two Patriarchs and four Elders jointly attacked Elder Linley, and yet Elder Linley wasn’t even injured in the slightest!”

On the side of the eight great clans, all of the Elders were pondering on how to make Linley fly out of the Skyrite Mountains. They viewed Linley as being the member of the Four Divine who was a true thorn in their side, a burr in their paw.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 63, A Turn Of Events

The borders of the Skyrite Mountains. The clan leaders and Elders of the Four Divine Beasts clan were all gathered together, holding a secret meeting. This tactic of the eight great clans wasn't a particularly brilliant one, but it really was vile, venomous, and vicious!

When the Four Divine Beasts clan had decided to withdraw from battle, this decision had already caused them teeth-gnashing agony.

But now the eight great clans came and openly mocked them and satirized them. This was like pouring oil onto a flame. The battle that resulted caused the Four Divine Beasts clan to feel angered, enraged, hate-filled. The four clan leaders and Elders were discussing how to resolve this matter, while Linley was pondering this matter as well. "Why exactly do the eight great clans want to kill me so badly? To the point where even two of their Patriarchs would be so shameless as to join forces to attack me?"

Linley was filled with confusion.

At the same time, Linley also looked towards the outside, but as he did, Linley suddenly frowned in puzzlement. "Hey, what are they doing?" The eight great clans had actually sent out several warriors who, working together, were shifting over a small mountain that was a thousand meters wide and nearly a hundred meters tall. The mountains of the Higher Planes were astonishingly heavy; given the size of this dwarf mountain, one could imagine how much it weighed.

"Why did they move a mountain over?" Bebe looked over, puzzled.

Gislason and the other clan leaders, as well as the Elders, all looked over as well. Everyone was rather puzzled.

Those warriors sent out their strengths in unison, directly tossing the dwarf mountain in front of them. It landed to the ground with a massive 'boom' sound, striking heavily down at the demarcating region between the Skyrite Mountains and the base of the eight great clans.

That arrogant looking man with the long green eyebrows flew towards the dwarf mountain.

"Him?" Linley wouldn't forget this man. It was he who had used the weapon-type Sovereign artifact to attack Linley.

The green-eyebrowed man flipped his hand, and instantly, a large amount of green energy knives flew into the air, slashing past the dwarf mountain. Immediately, large amounts of rocks and stones were smashed apart. The wind howled and pebbles blasted everywhere. In but a few moments, the appearance of the dwarf mountain had changed.

It was now eight hundred meters in diameter and fifty meters in height.

An enormous dueling platform!

"Swoosh!" A skinny youth with cold, insidious eyes suddenly flew over to the dueling platform. He swept everyone with his gaze, then said brightly, "You say that we are fighting you in groups? Fine. Today, let's

fight one on one. Nobody will be permitted to interfere in a duel. Linley, you killed my older brother. Today, I challenge you, Linley. Linley, dare you accept my challenge?"

"Linley, dare you accept my challenge?"

This voice echoed throughout the Skyrite Mountains, reverberating in the heavens. Even Delia and Wade, originally in the gorge, heard this voice calling out to Linley. Worried, they all flew out.

Everyone looked at Linley, waiting for Linley to respond.

"Linley, don't go fight." Gislason said softly.

"Linley." Delia had already flown out. Linley nodded towards Delia, then smiled.

At this time, the voice turned satirical. "You don't even have the courage to fight one on one. Hmph!" Mocking, disdainful words. Despite that, however, quite a few people on the enemy side were staring at Linley, waiting to see his reaction.

"Bebe, Delia, Wade. Let's go back." Linley just smiled calmly, then turned and left.

Linley could tell that the eight great clans clearly wanted to incite him to go out and do battle. But after the previous experience, where six major experts had attacked him en masse, Linley had come to an understanding. The eight great clans wanted to kill him very much. "If I go accept a challenge now, that isn't valor, that's idiocy."

Seeing Linley fly into the inner regions of the Skyrite Mountains, the Patriarchs and Elders of the enemy clans couldn't help but feel resigned. "Just now, when all of you attacked without killing Linley, I knew that Linley would definitely grow cautious. To force him to come out now...difficult!" A deep, rumbling voice rang out.

"There's no point to saying these things now!"

The eight Patriarchs were filled with regret. They had the perfect chance just then, but they had missed it. Kill Linley now? Linley wouldn't be so impulsive as to give them the chance!

Within the Skyrite Mountains. The great gorge. Three days had gone by since the eight great clans had moved over. During the past three times, the eight great clans had especially arranged for a group of people who, working in shifts, spent their entire time cursing, insulting, and mocking the Four Divine Beasts clan. Of course, they would occasionally have to rest, but the majority of the time in each day was spent cursing and mocking.

It seemed as though mocking the Four Divine Beasts clan was a source of amusement for them.

And of course, they would call out some Elders and clan leaders by name, including Gislason and the other three clan leaders, as well as Linley. These names were often singled out for ridicule. Even though Linley knew that this was a treacherous plot by the enemy side, Linley still grew infuriated upon hearing it.

"Linley, during this period of time, you must not go out, no matter what." Gislason instructed him solemnly.

Linley laughed bitterly and nodded. "Patriarch, don't worry. I understand. Only, to tell the truth..." Linley could still clearly hear the constant mockery and insults drifting down from above. The eight great clans had already spent three days here at the borders of the Skyrite Mountains.

"To be insulted like this...anybody, no matter how good their temper is, will be furious." Linley said somberly.

“In the past few days, quite a few of our clansmen were unable to endure it any longer, and they went to battle the eight great clans on the dueling platform.” Gislason let out a sigh. “When one’s rage reaches a certain level, one might not be able to endure it. These clansmen will even ignore the orders of their Patriarch and go do battle. But the eight great clans have held to their word as well; the fights have all been one against one. However, the results of the duels have actually been slightly favorable to our side.” Gislason, when saying these words, felt rather helpless as well.

The clansmen were going all out, but the experts of the clan weren’t able to overcome the enemy.

The battles of the Infernal Realm relied on supreme experts.

Linley understood that this was a gloomy subject, so he changed the topic. “Right, Patriarch. That day, when you saved me, you were able to block that Sovereign scimitar artifact. Are those black gloves of yours also Sovereign artifacts?”

“No.”

Gislason shook his head. “I don’t have any weapon-type Sovereign artifacts. The Lord Prefect gifted me with this set of black gloves. They are godspark weapons.”

“Godspark weapons?” Linley’s eyes lit up.

Bebe had a godspark weapon as well. Divine sparks were indestructibly tough, and so godspark weapons naturally were extraordinary.

“Sovereign artifacts are nourished by Sovereigns. Sovereigns contain astonishing levels of energy in their body, and so Sovereign artifacts have terrifying attack power. Godspark weapons, however, don’t actually have much energy in them. But they do have one strong point; their toughness!” Gislason laughed. “By relying on this godspark weapon, I am able to block even Sovereign artifacts. Still, that day, that wind-type Sovereign scimitar really was too frighteningly powerful. Even I only dared to rely on knocking it sideways and borrowing its own momentum, rather than taking it head on. After all, godspark weapons, compared to Sovereign artifacts, are still slightly inferior.”

Linley nodded.

Perhaps in terms of toughness, godspark weapons weren’t inferior to Sovereign artifacts. But Sovereign artifacts were formed from large amounts of Sovereign’s power nurturing them over countless years. Their attack power was simply too frighteningly great.

“If you have the chance, you should ask for a godspark weapon from the Lord Prefect as well. I trust the Lord Prefect would give you one.” Gislason laughed. “The power of your ‘Blackstone Space’ is indeed great, but your attack power is still a little weak. With a godspark weapon, you will be much stronger.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel stirred.

He had already witnessed the toughness of a godspark weapon for himself; it was far harder than even his own draconic scales.

“Don’t these people grow tired?” Gislason frowned, raising his head to stare into the distance.

“Four Pests clans, why is it that you have only sent ordinary Highgods? Where are the Elders? You let all these minor figures come out to fight, while the Elders all hide like cowards. Haha...” Mocking laughter drifted in from outside.

Linley couldn’t help but furrow his brow in anger.

Although he was able to forcibly restrain his anger, he was still annoyed when hearing these things. When one grew annoyed, one would become irritable as well.

“Endure for a few more days. The clan is currently carving out an enormous magic formation that will form a giant elemental barrier. By then, all sound will be blocked out between the outside world and us.” Gislason said helplessly. Being constantly assaulted by those voices was a form of torture.

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In the air above the Skyrite Mountains, an enormous elemental barrier had taken form. No matter what the forces of the eight great clans were saying, the clansmen were unable to hear it. But although they couldn't hear it...everyone still felt unhappy.

This sort of action was akin to just holding their hands over their ears. They felt humiliated!

“The final bottleneck of the Profound Mysteries of Vitality truly is hard to break through.” Linley sat in the meditative stance atop a grassy area. Linley had been seizing every moment, wanting to reach mastery in the Profound Mysteries of Vitality, so as to become a Highgod.”

In the past few days, although at first, the eight great clans had continued their insults and mockery, the clan had erected that enormous magic formation, sealing off all sound.

These things caused Linley to constantly feel a suppressed rage in his heart.

“Boss.” Suddenly, Bebe's voice rang out. “Grandpa came.”

Linley opened his eyes. He saw that in mid-air, Beirut, Bebe, and Phusro were flying down. Beirut had that perpetual smile on his face. Linley immediately stood up, walking forward to greet them.

“Linley, you are actually able to keep calm, eh?” Beirut chortled.

“What other choice do I have, other than keep calm?” Linley said helplessly.

“Aren't they holding one-on-one duels outside? Why don't you go?” Phusro asked with curiosity, while Linley said resignedly, “Phusro, those eight great clans are definitely fixated on killing me. In addition...I'm still a bit too weak. I'm not a match for those eight Patriarchs.”

Phusro laughed. “I have to tell you, if you don't go now, in the future, it'll be hard for you to find another opportunity like this.”

“What do you mean?” Linley asked disbelievingly.

In the future, he wouldn't have a chance to go out and fight? Linley looked suspiciously at Beirut and Phusro. “Lord Beirut, what are you two...?”

“It is about time for this noisesome performance to come to an end.” Beirut laughed calmly. “Come. Take me to your Patriarch.”

“Grandpa, the Patriarch doesn't know that you are here?” Bebe was rather astonished.

Phusro laughed resignedly. “Your Grandpa wanted to see you right away, so he flew over here directly...those patrolling warriors recognize myself and Beirut, so they didn't dare stop us.” Just as they spoke, several whooshing sounds rang out.

“Lord Prefect.” Gislason and several others flew over.

“Lord Prefect, you should have informed me that you were coming. I would’ve gone to welcome you.” Gislason said with a laugh.

Beirut just laughed calmly. “Enough, Gislason. Hurry up and give the order to your Elders as well as important clansmen. Have them all be summoned here. Today, I will help your Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans resolve the bonds of enmity and hatred that have ensnared you.”

Gislason was stunned, and the Elders behind him were stunned as well.

In recent days, especially after the eight great clans had moved to the Skyrise Mountains, Gislason and the others had long ago begun to feel exhausted from the ongoing mental pressure. None of them knew...when this would come to an end.

Sometimes, they too wanted to act as those ordinary clansmen had. To go crazy, and to go battle against the enemy!

But they were clan leaders and Elders. They had to consider what was in the best interests of the clan!

The pressure of carrying these heavy burdens had nearly driven them mad.

“Lord Prefect, you...what did you just say?” Gislason stuttered.

“Isn’t this what you’ve always wanted me to do?” Beirut laughed calmly.

A look of wild joy appeared on Gislason’s face. With a ‘bang’ sound, he actually fell heavily to his knees, his eyes glistening with tears. “Lord Prefect, I...our Four Divine Beasts clan will never forget the kindness you have shown us!” Involuntary tears came to the eyes of the Elders behind him as well.

“Hurry up and go invite the other three clan leaders. Have the Grand Elder and the others come as well.” Gislason hurriedly instructed.

“Yes, Patriarch!”

These Elders were moving with vigor and purpose now.

Linley just stared sideways at Beirut, who turned and looked back at him. “Linley, why are you looking at me like this?”

“I...I somewhat can’t believe it.” Linley still felt as though he were in a dream.

Although nobody in the eight great clans was capable of overcoming Beirut, still...the clan had multiple Sovereign’s Emissaries. If Beirut was going to force them to resolve their hatred with each other...wasn’t this going to cause a huge amount of trouble for him?

“Patriarch! Terrible news!” A figure flew over at high speed. “The Grand Elder, the Grand Elder, she’s gone to the dueling platform. She’s currently battling against the forces of the eight great clans!”

“What?!”

Gislason instantly grew frantic.

“Let’s go have a look.” Beirut just laughed as he spoke.

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 64,

Supremacy

“The Grand Elder went to the dueling platform?” Linley was very puzzled as well.

He immediately followed Beirut, Phusro, and the others as they flew out of the great gorge. After flying out of the gorge, Gislason glanced sideways at the elemental barrier covering the entire Skyrite Mountains, then shouted towards a group of patrolling warriors above Dragon Avenue, “Convey my orders. The entire elemental barrier is to be withdrawn and dispersed!”

“Uh....yes, Patriarch!”

These patrol warriors were rather surprised, but then they immediately came to their senses.

Linley stared at the elemental barrier covering the entire Skyrite Mountains. “This is an insult. A humiliation for the clan!” Others were insulting them, but all they could do was hold their hands over their ears, not daring to fight back? If this wasn’t humiliating, what was?

The dueling platform between the Skyrite Mountains and the eight great clans. After multiple battles, it was filled with countless holes already, and dark red blood stained the entire dueling platform.

“Haaaargh!”

An illusory draconic claw pierced through the enemy’s skull, then retracted. The Dragonformed Grand Elder glanced calmly into the distance. “Hmph. Next!” This was the third person she had killed on the dueling platform.

The first person she had killed had been an ordinary Highgod who had won a previous battle.

The second person she had killed was just a Six Star Fiend.

But the third she had killed, that was an Elder-level expert.

“Gaia! It seems today, you are looking to die.” The experts of the eight great clans hastened over as well.

“Looking to die? I want to see which of you members of the eight great clans will be capable of killing me today.” The Grand Elder’s icy gaze swept through them, no fear in her eyes at all. The past ten thousand years had already pressured the Grand Elder to the point of madness.

Her father had died, causing the Grand Elder endless grief.

The clan had been unable to escape from this disaster, and as they had been fled and pursued, her husband had died.

And now, a few centuries ago, her one and only son, Forhan, had died as well. And she herself had been forced to kill him with her own two hands.

Who could understand the level of grief, pain, and depression in the Grand Elder’s heart? Still, in her heart, she always remembered the clan, and that she had to remain strong for the clan. But in the past few days...

The eight great clans had been like mosquitoes, constantly mocking and insulting the Four Divine Beasts clan to the point where the clan had even been forced to set up an enormous elemental barrier. This sort of action caused the Grand Elder to feel humiliated.

She wasn't able to endure it any longer. She didn't want to continue suppressing herself either. She was afraid that she would go insane!

Kill, then!

Kill to her heart's content! Only in slaughter would she be able to vent the rage and grief in her heart.

The Grand Elder stood there arrogantly on the dueling platform, her silver masked smudged with a hint of blood. "Who will come fight against me? No matter who comes, I will accept the challenge." The Grand Elder's gaze swept past the eight Patriarchs as she snickered.

The eight Patriarchs all felt rather that this was rather troublesome.

The second generation members of the Four Divine Beasts clan all had Sovereign artifacts. Gislason, for example, had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. As for the Grand Elder, Gaia, she had an armor-type Sovereign artifact that was fused with her draconic scales.

Although the eight great clans didn't fear her, the Grand Elder was very hard to deal with, given that she had an armor-type Sovereign artifact.

"Patriarch Barbary, it should be easier for you to deal with her. You go." Patriarch Boleyn said.

Patriarch Barbary swept his tiger-like gaze forward towards her. Nodding slightly, his body suddenly flickered as he flew atop the dueling platform.

"I knew that it would either be you or Venna. None of the other six dare." The Grand Elder snickered. This armor-type Sovereign artifact made it so that the Grand Elder could ignore the material attacks of the enemies, while she herself could use her powerful body to attack.

The Grand Elder's soul defense was also very strong; after all, she had that azure glow that was her innate ability, as well as an ordinary soul-protecting artifact.

But of course...

Although she was powerful, the eight enemy Patriarchs were also powerful.

"Gaia, today is the day of your death." A deep voice rang out, which seemed to reverberate within that mighty chest. Patriarch Barbary, more than three meters tall, extended his right arm. A long blue whip suddenly appeared, tens of meters in length, like an enormous blue serpent.

"Who knows which of us shall be the one to die!"

The Grand Elder said in a fierce voice. And then, her body suddenly shot forward, instantly passing through the dueling platform. Patriarch Barbary leapt forward as well, his long whip lashing out, forming multiple circles that sought to wrap themselves around the Grand Elder.

By the time Beirut, the Patriarch, and the others hurried over to the borders of the Skyrite Mountains, the Grand Elder and Patriarch Barbary had already been locked into fierce combat. Still, in this battle, the Grand Elder was at a disadvantage.

That long whip was too monstrously powerful.

“This...this is the power of the Grand Elder?” Linley stared, amazed, at the scene before him. The Grand Elder and Patriarch Barbary had completely transformed into two balls of dancing shadows, but the low sound of hammer-like blows and the spatial explosions that could be seen everywhere caused Linley to stare in disbelief.

Beirut glanced sideways at Linley, then laughed calmly. “Don’t be so surprised, Linley. Gaia’s draconic scales includes an armor-type Sovereign artifact in them. Naturally, her punches and kicks are formidable. As for her opponent, that long whip is a weapon-type Sovereign artifact. Sovereign artifact against Sovereign artifact...the collisions will naturally be very powerful.

Linley took a deep breath.

“Linley, the power of your weapons are a bit weak. Would you like a weapon that is a bit more powerful?” Beirut laughed calmly.

Linley turned to look towards Beirut, his eyes filled with amazement. No matter how stupid he might be, he could tell that Beirut seemed to be offering him a powerful weapon. What sort of weapon? The first thing Linley thought of was...a godspark weapon!

“It isn’t easy for me to make a godspark weapon either.” Beirut laughed calmly. “So you work hard first. Once you become a Highgod, I’ll make one for you.”

Linley’s heart surged with excitement.

With a godspark weapon, he would at least have some capability of resisting the attacks of an enemy with a Sovereign weapon.

“Work hard and become a Highgod soon.” Beirut chortled.

Linley turned his head to stare at the platform. The Grand Elder’s battle against Patriarch Barbary had already reached a feverish point, and that long whip seemed to have transformed into countless giant serpents, surrounding the entire dueling platform.

“How could it become like this?” Linley stared at the dueling platform in surprise. The longer Patriarch Barbary fought, the more relaxed he seemed to be. That long whip had already reached the level of seeming to have a million branches, constantly and endlessly encircling the Grand Elder.

The more he watched, the more Linley realized how truly limitless the profound mysteries were.

“He’s trained quite well in the Laws of Water.” Beirut said in praise.

“Eh?” Beirut glanced sideways at Linley. “This kid...he really does get absorbed so easily.” Beirut finally began to understand why Linley trained so quickly.

While Beirut’s group was watching the duel, the Patriarchs and Elders of the eight great clans were staring towards them in shock. “That Beirut came. He actually came!”

“Beirut won’t interfere, will he?” A hint of panic flashed through Patriarch Boleyn’s eyes.

“We didn’t violate his orders. He won’t interfere.” Patriarch Reinales said with certainty, but despite saying that, he still felt worry in his heart.

The eight great clans felt a hint of dread towards Beirut.

When one reached the level of the clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan, the Patriarchs of the eight great clans, or the Grand Level, it could be said that their power was comparable to the Asuras of the Infernal Realm! But although they were powerful, they weren't monstrously powerful.

Soul defense, material defense...they had no weaknesses.

At their level, they had no need to fear each other. For someone on the other side to kill them would be difficult. But for them to kill someone else on the same level? Also difficult! It was much like how right now, Patriarch Barbary and the Grand Elder found it very hard to make this battle a life-and-death battle!

But Beirut was different!

Monsters like Beirut and Dunnington stood at the very peak of Highgods. They were capable of killing Asuras of the Infernal Realm. The power of individuals such as them was on a terrifyingly strong level.

If Beirut truly wanted to unleash a bloodbath, he could massacre the eight great clans. One could imagine how terrifying he was!

"Life without end, in a constant cycle...life without end, in a constant cycle..." Linley murmured to himself. He actually closed his eyes, and in his mind appeared the blurry shadow of that whip, and the profound mysteries held within it...

Seven Elemental Laws. Four Edicts.

Although they had different names, they all had some commonalities; for example, earth had the Essence of the Earth, while fire had the Essence of Fire. Some soul mutants, in turn, were capable of fusing and simultaneously using profound mysteries from different Laws.

Why were they able to fuse them?

Because they had commonalities and shared characteristics!

Different Laws weren't completely separate; their profound mysteries were all interconnected. The Elemental Laws of Water had a hint of a connection with the 'Profound Mysteries of Vitality' of the Laws of the Earth. At this moment, Linley just so happened to seize that connection...

Linley was completely absorbed in his insights, but Gislason and the others were growing somewhat frantic. "Lord Prefect, my little sister's situation is becoming worse and worse. Let's pause it." Gislason wanted to pause it, but he didn't have the ability to.

Two Sovereign artifacts were clashing against each other. He didn't dare to intervene!

"This sort of battle is indeed pointless." Beirut laughed calmly.

"Swish!"

He moved so quickly, it seemed as though he had teleported!

Beirut instantly inserted himself into the center of the dueling platform. With a low thudding sound, the entire battle suddenly ground to a halt. Beirut was gripping one end of the long whip in one hand, while clutching the Grand Elder's draconic claw in the other.

"Whoah..." Bebe stared, wide-eyed.

“Too powerful.” Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, the other clan leaders, and even the Patriarchs of the eight great clans couldn’t help but feel their hearts clench tightly. The Grand Elder’s punches were comparable to the attacks of a Sovereign artifact, while the long whip really was a Sovereign artifact, and had transformed into countless movements.

But Beirut had effortlessly grabbed each with a single hand.

He dared to actually grab Sovereign artifacts with his bare hands...the power and might of Beirut caused Gislason and the others to be completely stunned. Although Beirut was also an Asura of the Infernal Realm...he vastly outstripped the other Asuras.

“Enough. Let it be finished.” Beirut said calmly.

The Grand Elder and Patriarch Barbary were both stunned. The Grand Elder silently retreated, while Patriarch Barbary opened his mouth as though he wanted to say something, but he didn’t dare to. In the end, all he could say was, “Since the Lord Prefect has made the request, I will spare her life.” After speaking, all he could do was fly back.

The eight great clans on one side. The Four Divine Beasts clan on the other. And between them, standing in the center of the dueling platform, surrounded by countless experts, was Beirut.

“Lord Prefect, why didn’t you tell us that you were coming?” Patriarch Boleyn laughed merrily, seeming to be quite friendly. There weren’t many clans that would dare offend monstrous individuals such as Beirut or Dunnington.

Even when the Four Divine Beasts clan was at the height of their power and glory, with the four Sovereigns behind them, although the clan didn’t fear Highgod Paragons, they wouldn’t want to offend figures on that level either.

“Oh. Today, I came to help your two sides resolve your differences with each other.” Beirut laughed calmly.

The Patriarchs and Elders of the eight great clans couldn’t refrain from having stiff looks appear on their faces.

“It has been more than ten thousand years now. You have been battling in my Indigo Prefecture this entire time, and I have been watching everything. By now, the Four Divine Beasts clan have lost enough of their Elders, and their reputation has been badly damaged as well. This punishment is sufficient! As I see it, your eight great clans should return to the places from whence you came.” Beirut said elegantly and lightly.

Return to the places from whence they came?

The eight Patriarchs were so furious, their faces reddened. The Elders of the eight great clans were also so angry that they could die.

“Lord Prefect.” Unable to restrain his fury, Patriarch Edric spoke out. “In all these years, our eight great clans have never disobeyed your orders. We have never attacked into the Skyrise Mountains. Back then, you said...that as long as we do not attack into the Skyrise Mountains, you will not interfere. So why is it that today you are interfering?”

The eight Patriarchs felt hatred.

Hatred for Beirut for not honoring his promises. They were indeed afraid of Beirut, but no matter how powerful Beirut was, he couldn’t just ignore his promises.

Beirut just let out a calm laugh. He didn’t say a word.

Patriarch Boleyn's hoarse voice rang out as well. "Lord Prefect, it is true that many members of the Four Divine Beasts clan have died. But over these years, haven't our eight great clans also lost many people? What's more, when the four Sovereigns were alive, the Four Divine Beasts clan's actions left behind one blood debt after another. My own son was killed by the members of the Four Divine Beasts clan, and the reason? That person took a fancy to my son's wife!"

"Lord Prefect." The Nether Serpent Patriarch also said in a low voice. "I had nine sons and daughters, but now? Only one is left! The other eight all died, and all of them died unjust deaths. Even if our Barbary clan ignores the other blood debts which were incurred...if it weren't for the fact that we hate them so much, why would we be willing to sacrifice even our Elders, for the sake of eradicating them?"

"Beirut." Reinales said in a low voice. "You and I are both Emissaries under the command of the Bloodridge Sovereign. I imagine you know my story...you tell me. Can I possibly so easily give up the enmity I hold against them?"

"Lord Prefect..."

All eight Patriarchs spoke out angrily.

They had killed many members of the Four Divine Beasts clan, yes...but had it been easy for them? Their Elders had died as well, one after the other. In addition, the stockpile of Sovereign's Might which their eight great clans held was smaller than the stockpile held by the Four Divine Beasts clan. In fact, over the course of revenging themselves upon the Four Divine Beasts clan, the eight great clans had actually lost slightly more Elders.

It was only because those losses were evenly spread amongst their eight clans that they had been able to withstand these losses.

Over all these years, they too had lost around two hundred Elders! Their Elders were also the pillars of their clans. Did they want their Elders to die? They weren't willing for it to happen...but over the course of countless years, from ancient times till now, the amount of hatred that had accumulated was simply too great!

They were willing to move their entire clans and willing to spend the lives of their Elders in order to fight. They were even willing to use words to insult and mock. These actions were very despicable, and they cared about their face as well. Did they want to do these things?

No...but they had no choice!

The Four Divine Beasts clan had retreated into the Skyrise Mountains. This was their only way to get them to come out!

"I know that your eight great clans and the Four Divine Beasts clan have great enmity. But the Four Divine Beasts clan has lost nearly ninety percent of their Elders, and their reputation has suffered greatly as well...I expect that the entire Infernal Realm will come to learn of these things. The glory of the Four Divine Beasts clan is over, and many of their Elders died...it is enough!"

Beirut said calmly, "And what's more, in the past, they didn't exterminate your clans either."

"Lord Prefect, originally, you said that if we didn't attack the Skyrise Mountains, you wouldn't interfere. But today!" Patriarch Boleyn couldn't help but speak out. The other seven Patriarchs as well as a large group of Elders were all staring at Beirut as well.

The Four Divine Beasts clan was staring at Beirut as well.

The members of the Four Divine Beasts clan had nearly been pushed to the brink of madness. Each of them was filled with the utmost agony. They now hoped...that the issues between the two sides would come to an end!

“I did indeed give my word!” Beirut laughed calmly. “And it is true that you have never attacked the Skyrite Mountains. However...today, I’m not the one interfering in this matter. Rather...the almighty Sovereign is!”

Beirut waved his hand, and a piece of lambskin parchment with complicated magic runes appeared within it.

“Crackle...” The lambskin suddenly ignited, and a strange energy ripple spread out.

The eight Patriarchs were stunned.

“Sovereign?” They didn’t dare believe it.

But right at this moment, a very unique sort of energy appeared in the world. A black energy quickly began to coalesce in the skies, and this black energy was the awe-inspiring ‘Destruction-type Sovereign power’. To coalesce Sovereign power out of thin air...what sort of ability was this?

A large amount of Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might took form in mid-air, coalescing into an enormous black face that was tens of meters high.

A terrifying, awe-inspiring aura of supremacy spread out.

“Sovereign!” Reinales was the first one to sink to his knees in supplication. He could immediately recognize...that this was the Bloodridge Sovereign whom he served.

The enormous black face floated there in mid-air, staring down at the various Patriarchs and Elders, as well as the millions of clansmen of the two sides. Everyone felt as though they couldn’t breathe. “Whooooosh.” Countless people fell to their knees, all of them incomparably nervous.

“Sovereign.” Beirut bowed.

The enormous black face revealed a hint of a smile towards Beirut, and then said in a voice that echoed like thunder, “Let the matter between the eight great clans and the Four Divine Beasts clan come to an end. Return to the places from whence you came.”

“Yes!” Reinales was the first to respond.

Although the other seven Patriarchs were reluctant in their hearts to do so, they still said in a respectful voice, “Yes!”

Beirut alone was enough to engender terror in them, to say nothing of a Sovereign. It would be utter simplicity itself for a Sovereign to annihilate all eight of their clans. The supremacy of a Sovereign...was inviolable and irresistible!

“Beirut.” The enormous black face turned to look towards Beirut, his gaze like pillars of light.

“Sovereign.” Beirut bowed.

“Who is that youth standing over there?” The enormous black face said. “In this place, aside from yourself, only that youth remains on his feet.” The Sovereign’s gaze was focused towards the distance. When a Sovereign descended, who would dare to be so wild and arrogant as to remain on his feet? Puzzled, Beirut turned his head to look, and Gislason and the others did so as well...

And they saw that Linley was standing there, his eyes shut, not moving at all. It seemed as though he even had a hint of a smile on his face.

“Linley?” Beirut felt rather amazed as well.

Just now, when they saw the Sovereign appear, Gislason and the others had all immediately knelt down nervously to await the Sovereign’s edict. Who would pay attention to Linley? Even if they had noticed anything, they wouldn’t dare to make a sound.

“Boss.” Bebe said frantically through their soul connection, but Linley didn’t react at all.

“Sovereign, he’s Linley, the one I mentioned to you before.” Beirut said in a low voice.

“Oh.” The Sovereign looked towards Linley curiously, and the beam of light emanating from his eyes fell upon Linley. “Someone is actually absorbed in gaining insights during the moment when I descend. In all my years, I’ve never seen this sort of situation happen before.”

And right at that moment...

“Rumble...”

A unique ripple surged out as the Laws of the universe descended. This sort of Law-ripple was one which everyone here was all too familiar with. These were the ripples of the Law which appeared when one became a Deity, or when one’s divine spark transformed. From within Linley’s body, a divine spark emanating an earthen yellow aura flew out.

The Laws of the Earth were transforming this divine spark, and at the same time, the soul was being transformed as well...

A Sovereign. The four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan. The Patriarchs of the eight great clans. Hundreds of Elders. Countless clansmen. They all watched as Linley became a Highgod. This perhaps had never before happened in the entire history of the Infernal Realm.

Some time later...

Linley opened his eyes.

“What’s going on?” Stared at by countless people, Linley couldn’t help but feel badly startled.

And then, Linley suddenly sensed a terrifyingly powerful presence. He couldn’t help but raise his head to stare into the air, where that enormous black face was staring at him. The twin beams of light emanating from those enormous eyes caused Linley’s heart to clench.

Linley, having seen a scryer recording of a Sovereign, instantly understood in his heart.

“Sovereign? When did this Sovereign come?” Linley was completely awestruck.

The lips of that enormous black face crooked upwards. “Amusing. Amusing.” And then, the enormous black face suddenly vanished. That enormous swirl of Destruction-type Sovereign power suddenly vanished, as though it had never existed.

Beirut flew over, staring at Linley, not knowing whether he should laugh or cry. “Linley, I told you that I’d make a godspark weapon for you when you became a Highgod, but there was...there was no need to make your breakthrough right away.”

“I...”

Linley didn't know what to say.

He himself hadn't known that he would suddenly gain that moment of insight.